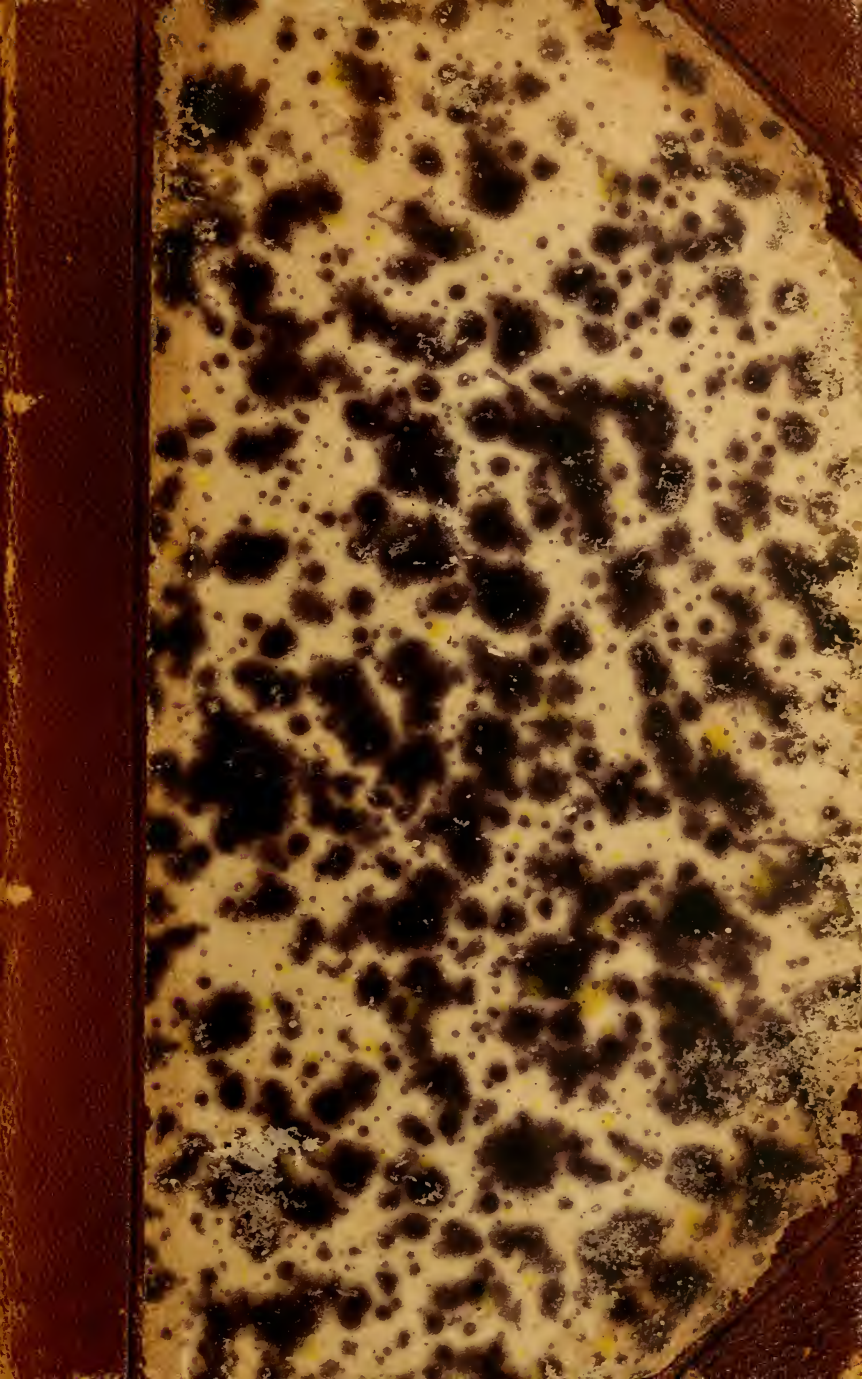




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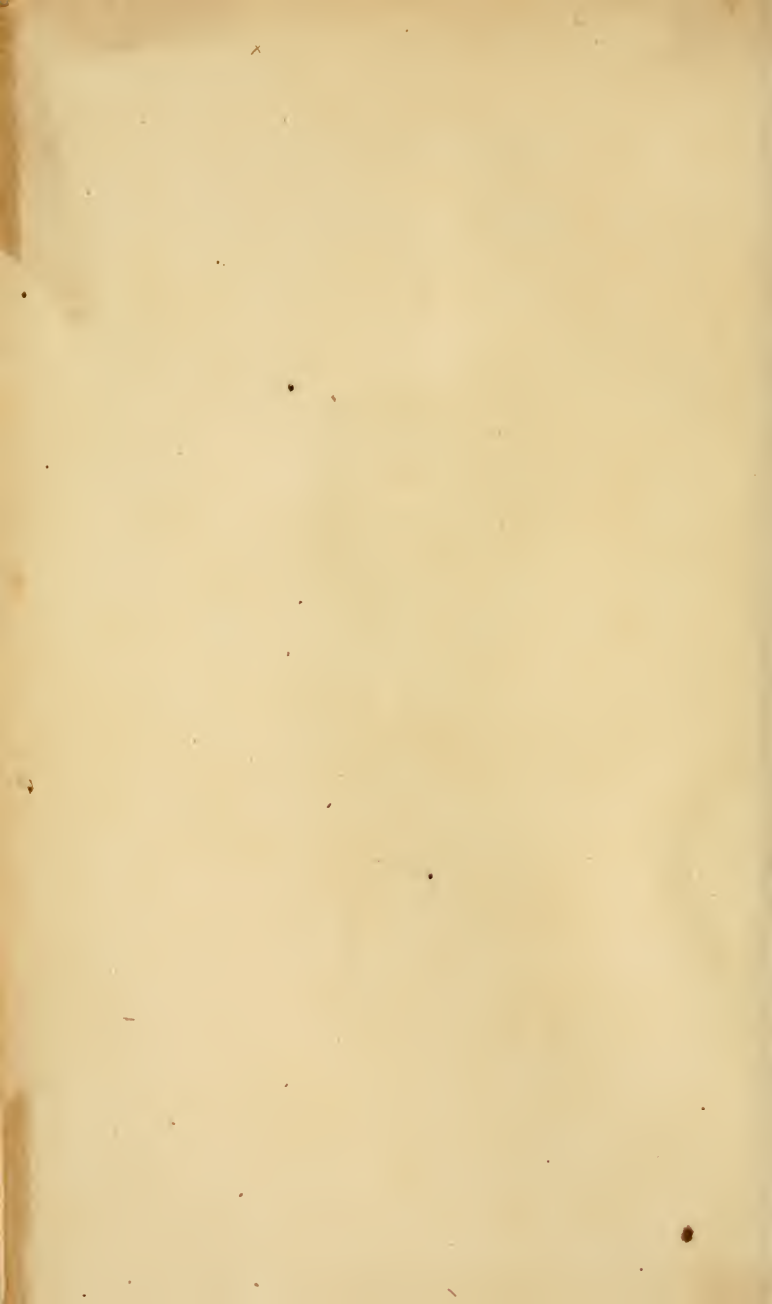
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Tr. William Jones.

London 1702.



Philip^w Limborch

A compleat system, or body
of divinity, both speculative
and practical, founded on
Scripture and reason.

Translated by William Jones.

London.

1702



appeal to the Judgment of your very Enemies. With the same modest Presumption I humbly conceive that your Grace will vouchsafe to countenance this Performance, which is intended to give Men a clearer Light into, and more moderate Thoughts of the Great Rules of our Christian Duty, as establish'd upon the Principles of Scripture and Reason.

True it is, my Lord, the Holy Scriptures are the only Rule of our Faith and Manners; and whatever Men obtrude upon others as necessary to be believ'd and practis'd, which is not either plainly contain'd in them, or may not be fairly deduc'd from them, ought to be rejected, as not bearing the Stamp of Divine Authority, to which alone our Consciences must be subjected. But notwithstanding this, a System or Body of Divinity may be of great Use, for the better ranging of the excellent Truths contain'd in Sacred Writ under their distinct and proper Heads, that so our

The Divine
View of Divine Matters may be the
less confus'd, and render'd the more
regular.

Let me beg leave to acquaint your
Grace, That the first Motive I had
for such a Design was this: In my En-
trance upon *Theological* Studies, a Pre-
late of our Church (One who has de-
serv'd well of the Reform'd Religion,
and merits little of that *Odium* lately
cast upon him) in his excellent Treatise
of the *Pastoral Care*, inclin'd me to pe-
ruse the Systems of several Divines: But
I must freely acknowledg, that I found
none more sutable to Reason and Scrip-
ture, to the Nature of God and his At-
tributes, and to the comprehensive and
charitable Genius of Christianity, than
That which I have now copy'd.

MY LORD,

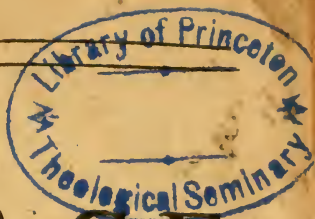
I am perswaded none will be offen-
ded at this System, but those who are
so hot and rash in their Censures, as
to Unchurch all the Protestant Chur-
ches beyond Sea, and that for a Defect
for

P. à Limborch.

V. I.

THE

PREFACE.



THIS one of the hardest matters in the World, nay I may venture to say 'tis impossible for a Man to square his Thoughts, and compose his Writings upon any Subject after such a manner, as to be able to give an *Universal* Satisfaction. Should his Notions in some Points be approv'd of by a *Few*, yet he must expect the Dislike of the *Numerous Many*; and 'tis great odds, if in some other Points he does not disgust those, who were pleas'd with him before. This Observation is so experimentally true, that there is no need of any Proof of it: But in nothing is it more evident than in those Discourses which are every day publish'd on *Religious* and *Moral* Subjects. An Author must have an extraordinary Talent, attended with better Success than the rest of his Neighbours, if treating even of *Practical* Matters, he is so fortunate as to meet with a general Applause. But should he enter upon the *Polemical* Part of Divinity, undertake to discuss and solve some knotty Points which are controverted among Christians, and but only *seem* to break out of the common Road: Let his Thoughts be ever so just, and his Reasonings ever so solid, for one Friend he will have a thousand Enemies, who

The P R E F A C E.

who are either ignorant of, or prejudic'd against; or at least do not duly consider the Force of his Arguments. Now from whence does this ill Usage proceed, but from the Fantastick and Capricious, the Envious and Censorious Nature of Mankind, who are so fondly enamour'd of their own dear Selves, as to think nothing *well* done or wrote, but what they do or write themselves?

These are Considerations enough to discourage one, who has his View only on this World, and the Advantages accruing from it, from attempting any thing of this nature for fear of displeasing. But a Person who is a diligent Enquirer after, and a sincere Lover of the Truth wherever he finds it; one who has Heaven and a Future State in his eye, and values his own and the Everlasting Concern of others so much, as not to postpone the promoting of either for any *Ambitus* after an earthly Preferment, will not be startled at these Discouragements. He heartily seeks the Truth, and finds it; frankly communicates it when found to the rest of the World, and expects no farther temporal Advantage from the Fruit of this his Labour, than what the Wisdom of Divine Providence shall think fit to assign him for his Share and Portion. Such an one does the Publisher of the following Papers profess himself to be; One who is not bigotted to any Sect or Party of Religion, but who esteems it his greatest Happiness to be a CHRISTIAN. Notwithstanding therefore all the Discouragements I may meet with, and the Oppositions which I foresee, I have ventur'd to send this System of Divinity into the World in an *English* Dress, as being a System (in my Opinion) the most suitable both to Scripture and Reason.

And this I could not but think to be very proper; since among that Variety of excellent and
useful

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useful Treatises on Sacred Matters, written hitherto in our Language, there is none that I know of which can justly lay claim to the Title of, *A Compleat System, or Body of Divinity*; which takes in all that is knowable, or fit and necessary to be known in our Holy Religion, both *Practical* and *Speculative*. That Celebrated Piece, *The Whole Duty of Man*, is indeed an extraordinary Directory or Guide in all the *Practical* Offices and Duties of a Christian: But then here it rests, and gives us little or no account of many things proper to be apprehended and believ'd by us, in order to render our Practice the more substantial, as being establish'd on sound and solid Principles. Dr. Scott, in the first Part of his *Christian Life*, has follow'd almost the same Track, only with this difference, that he distinguishes Religion into that of the *Means*, and that of the *End*; a Distinction which runs through his whole Performance. But in two other Volumes he has carry'd matters a little farther; establishing the eternal Difference between Good and Evil; treating at large of Divine Providence; giving us right Notions concerning the Nature of God; correcting the Misapprehensions of some Men about it, and discoursing very particularly concerning the Mediatorial Office of Christ. However, his Treatise cannot properly be call'd *a System of Divinity*, tho it comes pretty near one. The anonymous Author of *the whole Concern of Man*, pretends to supply the Defects of *the whole Duty of Man* in the *Speculative* part; but his Performance falls very short of being *a Compleat Body of Divinity*, since he does not so much as mention many controverted Points in Christianity.

I am far from derogating any thing from the Worth of these Authors, my Design in taking notice

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notice of them was only to shew how necessary a compleat System, or Body of Divinity, is in our English Tongue. Let Systems of this nature be ever so much decry'd by some, yet I am abundantly convinc'd of the Usefulness of them, and the Learned will (if they speak their true Sentiments) be of my mind.

But you will say, “ Why was such a Treatise publish'd in our Tongue? Was it not more proper to confine it to its own original *Latin*? And why (you will farther ask) if such a System was necessary, was *Limborch's* pitch'd upon rather than any other? Are not you a rank *Arminian* in countenancing his Thoughts, or can you justify all his Sentiments?” These Queries deserve a particular Reply, and shall be fully consider'd in this Preface.

As to the first of them, 'tis very ridiculous. For what occasion is there of confining the Knowledge of Divine Matters to an unknown Tongue? Must a Man be forc'd to study the Confusion of *Babel*, before he can know things necessary to his everlasting Salvation? This is barbarous Usage, and much like the *Romish* Practice of locking up the Scriptures from the Perusal of the Vulgar. True it is, the Unlearned may misinterpret the Scripture, and make false Applications of the Expositions of it, as deliver'd in a System of Divinity; but why should the Default of some debar others from the Knowledge of what is useful and necessary? Nay, the many excellent Sermons and Tracts on Religious matters, wrote and publish'd in *English*, are a sufficient Vindication of this Work.

But why was *Limborch's* System made choice of for a Foundation to this, rather than any other? To this I reply, That I found none more agreeable to Reason and Scripture than his; and
whenever

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whenever I do, I shall be ready to recant, being always willing to alter for the best. In the mean time, 'tis fit I should acquaint my Reader wherein I agree and disagree with *Limborch*; and therein I shall give an Abstract of the whole Work.

In his First Book he treats of the Authority, Perfection, and Perspicuity of the Holy Scriptures; to which I think no Protestant can deny his Subscription: since he proves against the *Romanists* Tradition, that the Scriptures are the only Rule of our Religion, and contain in them all that is necessary to be believ'd and practis'd. He farther treats of the Qualifications necessary to an Interpreter of Holy Writ, and proves beyond contradiction, that there is no visible Judg of Controversies in Faith here on Earth: with which Notion I own my self freely to agree, and am perswaded that most, if not all, Protestants are of the same mind.

In the Second Book *Limborch* treats of the Nature and Attributes of God, as also of his Decrees and Works both of Creation and Providence: And here again any Person besides the rigid *Calvinist* may with reason subscribe to most of what he has advanc'd on these matters. For what can be more becoming a Christian, than to represent God as amiable in his Nature; as one, who tho he has a supreme Right over, yet has a tender Regard to all his Creatures, especially to Man, the Master-piece of the visible Creation? What can be more derogatory to the Sanctity and Glory of the Divine Being, than to make him the Author of Sin? And on the contrary, what can tend more to the advancing his glorious Perfections, than to vindicate his Providence from so foul an Imputation? However, I must beg leave to dissent from the Professor in one point. He tells us that the Image of God in Man consists

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sists not in the Rectitude of his Mind, but only in that absolute Dominion he had over the rest of the Creatures. But I am not of his mind; I rather incline to their Opinion, who make this Image to consist in Right Reason, stamp'd upon the Soul of our first Parent at his Creation. 'Tis this reasoning Faculty with which we are endu'd, that distinguishes us from the Beasts that perish; and when rightly us'd, makes us to be of an Angelick, nay a Godlike Nature.

The Third Book is wholly bestow'd in giving us an account of the Great Work of our Redemption; for the due explaining of which, the Occasion of it, the moving Cause thereof, the Instrument by whose Mediation it was wrought, and the Work of Redemption it self, are distinctly consider'd. And here I am sensible that the Professor will not please every body, but will meet with many and potent Adversaries, particularly in what he has advanc'd with respect to the Imputation of *Adam's* Transgression, and Original Sin. 'Tis the current Opinion of the *Calvinists* and Schoolmen, that *Adam's* Sin was imputed to his Posterity, and that we are all born with Original Guilt about us. But this Doctrine is refuted at large by *Limborch*, who owns indeed that Infants are born in a less degree of Purity than *Adam* was created in; but then he denies that this Corruption is properly Sin, or that Children who die therein can justly be punish'd for it. And truly it seems highly repugnant to the Justice as well as Goodness of God to impute *Adam's* Transgression to his Posterity, and to punish them for an Offence committed without their Knowledg, much less Consent. What if we were all in the Loins of *Adam* when he transgress'd the Divine Command, yet how does it follow that we were all

Par-

tuous, or to drive them into the blackest Despair. These Consequences we have sufficiently prov'd to be the Issue of such a Doctrine, take it either in the *Supralapsarian* or *Sublapsarian* way.

And here let me beg leave, without the least Vanity or Ostentation, to declare, That from a Child I have always had an Aversion and Abhorrence to the harsh Doctrine of Absolute Election and Reprobation, and could never think of the fatal Consequences of it without trembling. "Is God (have I often reason'd with my self) "so infinitely Good and Wise, as well as Just, so "liberal a Benefactor to his whole Creation, "such a tender Lover of Souls; and can I ima- "gine that he should create and destine Men to "Destruction by such an Absolute Decree, as it "is impossible for them to reverse? Does he "declare in his Word, that he would not the "Death of a Sinner, but that he would have "all Men to be sav'd, and come to the Know- "ledg of the Truth; and can I at the same "time suppose that he has fix'd the everlast- "ing Condition of all Men with respect to their "Eternal Happiness or Misery, that it cannot be "render'd either better or worse by their greatest "Care or grossest Neglect?" These and such like were the Reasonings even of my younger Years, which inclin'd me to seek after another Notion of Divine Predestinanon, more suitable to the Nature of God, more consonant to the Holy Scriptures, and more conducive to the promoting of a Holy and Religious Life; and this of *Limborch's* I humbly take to be such an one. Nay, in consulting the Article of our Church upon this very Point, I find nothing in it to reproach me for being of the Foreign Professor's mind, and for declaring my Opinion thus plainly against the Absolute *Predestinarians*. What

reasons I have for this will sufficiently appear to any impartial Reader of the ensuing Papers, to whose Judgment I will freely submit.

As for what follows in the same Book, concerning the Divine Vocation or Calling, and concerning the Operation of Divine Grace, which *Limborch* proves not to be irresistible; tho it may thwart the Notions of the *Contra-Remonstrants*, yet I cannot but think that he has establish'd his own, and refuted their Opinion by such Arguments as are unanswerable. For to speak my mind freely in this point, they who are for such an irresistible Grace, rob Man of the Freedom of his Will, and render him a mere passive Machine: And if the case be thus, with what Justice can he be rewarded for his good, or punish'd for his bad Actions? A good Man at this rate would not be such out of choice, but necessity; and a wicked Man by the with-holding of such a Grace is fatally determin'd to sin on, being precluded from all means of growing better. And what is this but to introduce Fate, to transform Men from free into necessary Agents, and (which is worst of all) to charge God with all the Sins that are committed in the World? It cannot indeed be denied, but that God on some extraordinary occasions has made use of his irresistible Power, and this I take to be the case of *Paul's* Conversion; nay, I farther own that he may still make use of such a Power: But then I say, this is not the usual Method of his dealing with Men, nor can any Inference be drawn from particular Instances, to conclude any thing in general.

The greatest Part of the Fifth Book is properly speaking a Directory to us in all the Duties we owe as Christians to God, our Neighbour, and our selves; and contains the Sum of what is
to

to be met with more at large in *the Whole Duty of Man*: So that I conceive none can reasonably charge me with *Arminianism* for embracing the Sentiments of *Limborch* in these Practical Matters. In treating of the Sacraments, particularly concerning the Subject of Baptism, he may be said to dissent from our Church in some Points; but then what he advances, is done with so much Modesty and Moderation, that one cannot tell how to be displeas'd at it. What he urges with respect to the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper against the *Romanists* and *Lutherans*, is so reasonable, that I presume no *English* Protestant will oppose it. But in the Doctrine of Perseverance, where the Professor maintains that a Believer may apostatize from the Faith, he will, I am sensible have a great many Adversaries, particularly among the rigid *Predestinarians*, who think it impossible for the Elect finally to fall away. However, *Limborch* has establish'd his Doctrine by so many Texts and Instances taken out of Holy Writ, and by Arguments deduc'd from the Divine Exhortations, Threatnings and Promises, and has return'd so sufficient a Reply to the Arguments on the other side, that I cannot forbear being very much of his mind. For the Reader's farther Satisfaction, I refer him to the Treatise it self, where he will find this Point discuss'd at large, and he may be Judg for himself.

In the Sixth Book, which treats of the Promises and Threatnings of the New Covenant, as they relate either to this or the next Life, I know of nothing that can shock any Protestant besides the rigid *Calvinist*; who cannot perhaps approve of *Limborch's* Notion concerning Election, Justification, &c. But the Difference of their Sentiments proceeds from their different

Doctrines of Predestination, which being accounted for already, I shall say no more about it. In this Book the Popish Doctrine of Purgatory is sufficiently refuted, and to this I presume the Reformed of all Persuasions will readily subscribe.

What *Limborch* advances in the last Book concerning the Christian Church, and the Ministers and Government of it, will doubtless meet with great Opposition on all hands: For whether Episcopacy or Presbytery be the true Form, he has left undetermin'd; and this our High-Church-Men (as they call themselves) will not relish, who are for unchurching all the Churches where Episcopal Ordination has been wanting. I shall not enter into the Detail of this Dispute, wishing only the Misfortunes of some Reformed Churches had not been such as to give Rise to this unhappy Controversy. But to let these matters pass, I cannot but think what the Professor has said about the Authority of Synods, and the punishing of Hereticks, to be very just and reasonable. For with respect to the former, I cannot imagine that their Decisions in matters of Faith are binding upon any Man's Conscience, their Authority being only human, and of no farther force than as they relate to the outward Government of the Church. Nay, some are of opinion that Synods (excepting that of the Apostles) have done more harm than good to the Christian Religion, being generally compos'd of Men on one side only, who are warm in their Debates, and violent in their Decisions and Proceedings against others of the contrary Party. Let this be as it will; however, since all Councils consist of Persons subject to the like Passions and Infirmities with others, who are fallible, I cannot perceive how their Decrees and Canons can
make

make any Articles of Faith necessary to be believ'd, especially if those Articles be either repugnant to, or derogatory of the Doctrines contain'd in the Holy Scriptures. And this I take to be the very Doctrine of our Church, in what she declares in the Twentieth and One and Twentieth Articles of Religion, concerning the Authority of the Church and of General Councils.

Then as to the Doctrine of Hereticide, or extirpating of Hereticks, espous'd not only by the *Romanists* in general, but also by *Beza*, *Calvin*, and others of the Reformation in particular, who are for delivering Hereticks over to the Secular Power: This is entirely oppos'd by *Limborch*, who as he is for no other Discipline but what consists in Persuasions and Censures, is utterly against punishing of Hereticks with the Loss of Estate and Liberty, much less with Death. This his Opinion he establishes on several Arguments, refuting those that are brought in favour of the contrary Doctrine. And truly 'tis a Mystery to me, how any Man can be so fond of Papal Tyranny as to tread in their bloody Steps, or to be in love with the Doctrine of Hereticide. From whence, I beseech you, unless from this very Doctrine, have proceeded those Bulls and Excommunications that have been thunder'd out not only against private Persons, but also against Princes and whole Communities of Men, whose Countries have been laid under severe Indictions by the angry and pretended Successor of *St. Peter*? Was not the barbarous Murder of *John Huss* and *Jerom* of *Prague*, in violation of the most solemn Oaths and safe Passports, owing to this Principle, *That no Faith ought to be kept with Hereticks*? To what else but to this can we ascribe that famous Croisade (to the shame of *Rome* be

it spoken) which was carry'd on for the extirpating the *Waldenses* and *Albigenses*? Was not the Inquisition establish'd first at *Toulouse*, and afterwards in *Spain*, upon the very same foot? Have not all the bloody Massacres of Protestants in *Paris* and elsewhere been owing to this? To what else can we attribute the Rise of that pernicious Jesuitical Doctrine, That it is not only lawful, but also meritorious, to depose and kill such Princes as were Hereticks, or Favourers of them? And did not the two *Henries* of *France* experimentally feel the fatal Effects of that damnable Tenet? From whence, but from this Doctrine of Hereticide, proceeded all the open Attempts and secret Conspiracies that were carry'd on for the dethroning our Excellent Queen *Elizabeth*? Was it not upon the same Principle, that the deep, dark, and hellish Gunpowder-Plot was form'd against King *James* I. and his States?

But why should I enlarge? Methinks the very mention of those Cruelties and Barbarities of *Romish* Zeal, committed upon Protestants, under the pretence of propagating the Catholick Religion, and extirpating the *Northern* Heresy, might be enough to raise in our Minds such a just Abhorrence to all Papal Tyranny, and their Doctrine of Hereticide, as to make us asham'd of following their cruel method in reclaiming of Hereticks. For supposing them to have mistaken Notions even in some fundamental Points, and even in Articles necessary to Salvation; yet if this their Error be purely a Defect of their Understanding, and they be otherwise Men of Piety and Probity, I must needs say there are more gentle Methods of convincing and converting them, than those of the Wrack and Wheel, of the Inquisition and Dragoons, and
of

of Fire and Faggot. It cannot therefore be thought strange, if upon such Considerations I declare my self to be of *Limborch's* Opinion; and I am almost perswaded, whoever impartially weighs the Arguments which he has alledg'd, will own that I have reason for so doing.

But you will say, Must Hereticks be allow'd to broach their Errors, and by this means to corrupt the Purity of Christianity? By no means; they are to be oppos'd by all the Arguments that can be taken from Reason and Scripture; their Errors ought to be detected, and others caution'd against them, and themselves reduc'd if possible from the Error of their ways by the Weight and Force of the Truth. This is what a Christian and a Divine ought to do. But still, I say, we ought to follow the Apostle's Rule in the Case; we are in the Spirit of Meekness to instruct those who oppose themselves, if God peradventure will give them Repentance to the acknowledging of the Truth; we ought not to use any violence towards their Persons, tho we may and ought with Vigour to confront their Errors.

This I presume will be granted me by Men of Temper and Moderation, who are not of that persecuting Spirit, as to condemn and punish all who dissent from them. But let Hereticks fare ever so ill; yet I am of the mind that what *Limborch* has offer'd concerning a mutual Toleration and Union to be maintain'd between such Christians as agree in Fundamentals, and yet disagree in things not absolutely necessary to Salvation, is highly just and reasonable. For why should Protestants, who entirely agree with one another in the main and necessary Points of Christianity, upon the account of their Diversity of Opinions in other

lesser matters, be of a more irreconcilable and uncharitable Spirit than the Papists themselves, who never break the Peace of the Church by separate Communions, tho their Differences in some Points run higher than those which are among the Reform'd?

True it is, there was a hot sort of Spirit reigning among our selves in a late Prince's time, which gave no Quarter to those who would not conform to the National and Establish'd Church. This was partly owing to the unkind and severe Usage which the Church of *England* Men met with whilst the Dissenters were uppermost; so that when the Tables were turn'd, the *Lex Talionis* soon prevail'd. But God knows this was far from the Rules of our Holy Religion, which enjoins us not to render Evil for Evil, but to overcome Evil with Good. Nay, we have liv'd to see our Error in this kind of Retaliation, and have learn'd at last that the best way of making Dissenters Profelytes to our Church, is by the Force of Arguments and the Energy of a Holy Life; whereas Violence and Compulsion are wrong Methods of healing our Breaches. I am sensible this will be disgustful at this time a day to a great many who pretend to be High Churchmen. But let such remember, that not the outward and pompous Profession, but the inward Spirit and sincere Practice of a Christian, denominates him a true Member of the Church of Christ. And I will venture to say upon this occasion, that they who strictly conform to the Government, Worship, and Doctrine of the Church, who frequent its Ordinances, and lead Lives answerable thereto, tho they are not for damning all who dissent from them, but are charitably dispos'd to them, are the truest Members of the Church of *England*, taken even

even in the highest Strain. You may call them *Latitudinarians*, and what not; but they are the best Christians, who are of a large and comprehensive Charity, and breathe forth that universal Love and Peace, which our Saviour has expressly declar'd to be the Characteristical Mark of his Genuine Disciples.

Far be it from me, whilst I am pleading for such a charitable Disposition of Mind as the Gospel recommends, that I should pass any unjust Censure upon any sort or Sect of Christians of what Denomination soever: But this I think I may fairly and without breach of Charity aver, that the Hot Men of all Persuasions are mightily to blame, and are the unfittest Persons in the World to treat of a general Comprehension and Accommodation, being such as will hardly hearken to any such Proposal. They are usually so zealous for a Party to which they are wedded, that nothing how reasonable soever can be allow'd of in favour of the other side. Such fiery Spirits, acted with more Heat than Light, usually lose a sight of the Truth in the midst of the Smoak they have rais'd; and tho each Party fancy they have fast hold of it, yet it too often happens, that either one or both of them embrace the Shadow instead of the Substance. The case is quite otherwise with Men of a calmer and more moderate Complexion. Notwithstanding all their Dissensions in Opinion, yet being mov'd with a Spirit of Charity, tho they are so unhappy as not to agree in Judgment, they can very well agree in Affection. Such Men as these, be they of the Church, or Dissenters, are the properest to treat of an Accommodation; who if they cannot heal, will not widen our Breaches. 'Tis to such I recommend what *Limborch* has offer'd towards a full compromising of the unhappy Differences
that

that are still too notorious among Protestants. To use foul and opprobrious Language, to call hard Names, to cast bitter Reflections, and to keep at such a distance from one another, as if we had Daggers hid under our Garments, is not the way for us to become Friends: But an amicable Deportment and Behaviour, free and familiar Conferences about Spiritual Matters, a mutual Forbearance and Allowances made to Mens Consciences, and an universal Charity, are, with the Blessing of God, the surest Methods of uniting the Dissenters with the Church of *England*, and of making it thereby the Glory of the whole Protestant World.

And thus have I done with an Account of *Limborch's* Performance; and therein have, I hope, given satisfaction to the fair, impartial, and unprejudic'd Reader. Let others say what they will, I mind them not, since to the best of my Judgment I have in copying *Limborch* follow'd the Dictates of Right Reason, and the clearer Light of Sacred Writ. 'Tis some Comfort to me to consider, that most of the Modern Divines of our Church are on my side, and I think they have cause for it; so that if I must needs pass for an *ARMINIAN*, I am in good Company, whose Writings and Preachings will in a great measure justify my Agreement with *Limborch*. Nay it were very easy to prove from the Articles of our own Church, without offering the least Violence to them, how agreeable that Professor's Notions are in most of the controverted Points; but this will furnish me with Materials for a larger Essay than the Compass of this Preface can comprehend.

All that I think at present convenient for me to add, is to acquaint the Reader, that tho the present System is chiefly taken out of *Limborch's*
larger

larger Body, yet there have been many Improvements made to it. His System indeed was at first intended to be only abridg'd, which has been done in a great many places; but the nature of the Work was such, that in many other places the subject Matter would not allow of any Abridgment, but only a mere Translation. The Helps I have had from other Authors, such as Bishop *Wilkins*, Archbishop *Tillotson*, Dr. *Scott*, Mr. *Staynoe*, &c. are fairly own'd in the Body of the Treatise, whenever I had any occasion of citing them. There is very little of my own for which I can be accountable, besides the digesting it into a plain and familiar Method, and giving it as clean a Stile and Turn in our Language as I was capable of. I hope I have done justice to the Original, and have not misrepresented either *Limborch's* or the rest of the Authors Thoughts. Such as it is, I commit it to the wide World, to try its fortune. *Vale.*

TEXTS



TEXTS of SCRIPTURE explained in this TREATISE.

<i>Genesis.</i>			<i>Nehemiah.</i>		
Chap.	Ver.	Pag.	Chap.	Ver.	Pag.
2.	24.	695.	8.	3, 8, 9.	26.
6.	5.	201.		<i>Job.</i>	
14.	18.	767.	14.	4.	202.
45.	5, 7.	173.	Ibid.	15.	157.
49.	10.	321.		<i>Psalms.</i>	
50.	20.	173.	51.	5.	202.
	<i>Exodus.</i>		110.	1.	260.
7.	3.	172.	Ibid.	4.	332.
23.	4, 5.	269.	119.	18, 34.	20.
	<i>Leviticus.</i>		139.	21, 22.	616.
24.	16.	987.		<i>Proverbs.</i>	
	<i>Deuteronomy.</i>		16.	4.	170.
6.	13.	541.	Ibid.	9.	162.
Ibid.	16.	556.	20.	24.	ibid.
13.	1.	987.	21.	1.	ibid.
17.	8, 9, &c.	33.	23.	20.	776.
18.	15, 18.	330.		<i>Isaiah.</i>	
Ibid.	20.	987.	5.	1, &c.	416.
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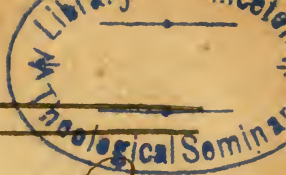
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Adam A COMPLEAT *Parsonage*
SYSTEM,
OR
Body of Divinity.

BOOK I.
Of the HOLY SCRIPTURE.

CHAP. I.
Of Theology and Religion in General.

I. **T**HEOLOGY or Divinity is a Science, in-^{Theology}
forming us in the true Notion of God, ^{defin'd.}
and in the Nature of that Service and
Worship we ought to pay him, as arising
from such a Notion of him. Some have stil'd God ^{Its Object}
the Object of this Science, but they are mistaken;
since Religion, or the Service of God, is properly the
proximate and more immediate Object of Theology;
and God, who is indeed the Object of Religion, is

ts End.

no more than the remote Object of Divinity. The ultimate End which this Science proposes, is, that a Man, by serving God according to the Rule which he hath prescrib'd, might attain Eternal Life as the Reward of his Obedience, to the Praise and Glory of the divine Wisdom, Justice, and Mercy.

II. From hence 'tis plain, that Theology is not a matter of mere Speculation; nor is it a mixt Science, partly Speculative, and partly Practical; but it is a Science wholly practical, its very End being such.

Religion
what.

III. By *Religion* (the Object of Theology) we are to understand the right way or Method of both knowing and serving the True God, upon the Hopes of obtaining a Reward from him: and it comprehends the Duties of Love, Fear, Faith, Hope and Obedience. It is either *Natural* or *Reveal'd*. Natural Religion depends upon the Dictates of right Reason, stamp'd by God on the Minds of Men, by the Light of which a Man may come to the Knowledge of God, and of his Duty. Reveal'd Religion depends upon those Manifestations which God has made of himself, in the various Dispensations under the Old Testament; and by his late full Declaration of his Will by Jesus Christ under the New; which last Oeconomy we call the *Christian Religion*, and shall chiefly insist upon it in the Sequel of this Treatise.

Natural
Religion.Reveal'd
Religion.

C H A P. II.

Of the Being or Existence of GOD.

I. **H**AVING by way of Introduction premis'd those short Hints concerning Theology and Religion in general, we shall now proceed to give you a more distinct View of Religion in particular; wherein three things more especially offer themselves to Consideration: First, its Foundation. Secondly, its Rule. Thirdly, Religion it self, and the several Parts of it.

II. The

II. The Foundation of all Religion is the Belief of a God, according to that of the Apostle, Heb. 11. 6. *He that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a Rewarder of them that diligently seek him.* Now the Idea we have of God is, That he is a Sovereign and Independent Being, owing his Existence to no other Cause; That he is the Cause of all other Beings; And that 'tis he who directs and governs all other Beings by his infinite Wisdom and Counsel. *The Idea of God, which it implies*

III. For the Proof of the Existence of God, there are several sorts of Arguments produc'd. Some argue from the innate Idea of a Deity stamp'd upon the Minds of Men; others from Principles of Nature; and others again pretend that all the Knowledge we can have of God comes only by Faith, which depends wholly upon Divine Revelation. We shall wave the first sort of Arguments drawn from innate Ideas, since 'tis a disputable Point; but from natural Principles several Evidences may be drawn to prove the Existence of God; and they are such as these. *Argument to prove the Existence of God.*

First, Whatsoever is, is not of it self, but owes its Origin to some other; and that again to some other: neither is there any natural Cause but what was produc'd by a preceding Cause; therefore either an infinite Progression of natural Causes, or a circular Motion of them must be allow'd, both which are false and absurd, and full of Contradictions; or else we must have recourse to some first and independent Cause, which exists necessarily of it self, and is the Cause of all others; and this Cause is God. *Arg. 1.*

Secondly, It appears, that all created Beings, not only Rational, but also Irrational, even inanimate Beings, aim at some End in their Actions. To this End they are either carry'd by themselves, or are directed to it by some other: But Plants, Herbs, &c. are incapable of any Design, and yet are directed to some End; therefore it necessarily follows that there is a superior Cause which directs each of these to their proper Ends, without their knowing any thing of it; and this Cause is God. *Arg. 2.*

Thirdly, All other created Beings, whether Celestial or Terrestrial, are appointed for the use of Man, and are subservient to him. Now this could never be *Arg. 3.*

effected by the fortuitous Concussion of Atoms, as *Epicurus* and his Followers dream; nor could it be so order'd by Man, out of whose reach all those Products of Nature lie; but it was the Effect of an infinite and wise Being, which is God.

g. 4. *Fourthly*, The universal Consent of all Mankind speaks the same thing; and those few who have deny'd the Being of God, are not to be accounted in the Number of rational Creatures, but are the Monsters and Disgrace of Human Kind.

g. 5. *Fifthly* and lastly, Natural Conscience is another Proof of the Existence of God, since it recoils upon and condemns us for a bad Action, and approves of and comforts us under the Sense of having done well; which does not arise from any innate Fear and prejudicated Education, but from a thorow Apprehension, that there is a God who judgeth in the Earth.

IV. Tho the foremention'd Arguments are sufficient to evince the Truth of the Proposition, that God is; and to shew that by the mere Light of Reason, and from natural Principles, we may arrive to the Knowledge of God: yet it must be granted that the clearest and brightest Notices we have of the Nature as well as Existence of God, are deriv'd from Divine Revelation, as the force of Miracles. By *Miracles* we are to understand, all those Operations which are not only above the Power, but also contrary to the ordinary Course and the fix'd Laws of Nature. That there have been such Effects, cannot be reasonably deny'd: And 'tis as plain that none but God could have been the Cause of them; since none but that superior Power, which has prescrib'd and fix'd the Laws of Nature, can upon just and good Reasons dispense with and make any Alteration and Relaxation in them. As for those who Atheistically deny all Miracles, 'tis certain that they oppose themselves against as plain Matters of Fact as ever were related in any History. And for such as would solve them according to the Laws of Mechanism, or Nature, 'tis evident that they make no distinction betwixt the Power of Nature, and the Power of God. We shall not stand to refute the Opinion of those Men; all who own Miracles must acknowledg that some are above the Power
of

of natural Causes, particularly the raising of the Dead; and that therefore the Miracles wrought by *Moses* and others before Christ, as well as those wrought by him, are a sufficient Demonstration of a Power above Nature, and prove the Existence of God; the Belief whereof is the Foundation of all Religion.

C H A P. III.

Of the Rule of Religion, viz. the Holy Scripture.

IN the last Chapter we treated of the Foundation of all Religion, *viz.* the Being or Existence of God; and now shall proceed to the Rule of Religion, which we shall consider both with respect to its Nature, and the Use of it.

For the due Explication of the first of these it will be requisite to consider, (1.) What this Rule is: (2.) The Truth and Authority of this Rule: (3.) Its Perfection; and (4.) Its Perspicuity and Clearness. Of each of these we shall discourse distinctly and particularly in the following Sections.

S E C T. I.

Of the Canonical and Apocryphal Books of the Old and New Testament.

I. In the first place then we say, That this Rule is the Holy Scripture, or the Books of the Old and New Testament, wherein God has reveal'd and manifested his Will to Mankind. And here we mean only those Books which have been own'd as Canonical by the greatest Part of the Christian World; excluding all such as are Apocryphal, tho admitted into the Canon of the *Romish* Church, which stiles them *Deutro-Canonical*. 'Tis true indeed that the Primitive

Christians allow'd of the reading of these Apocryphal Writings at home, and some of them were read publickly in the Congregation (as is still practis'd among some of the Reform'd Churches) for the Edification of the People; but yet they never look'd upon them as a Rule of Faith, nor to be of equal Authority with the Books which they own'd as truly Canonical. For it might be prov'd by several Instances, that in some places they contradict the Canonical Writings, which is a sufficient Proof that the Authors of those Passages were not mov'd or inspir'd by the Holy Ghost, since he cannot but be, *ubique sibi constans*, always consistent with himself: That the Authors have inscrib'd their Works under forg'd Names; particularly the Book of *Wisdom* is attributed to King *Solomon*, tho it be none of his: And lastly, that others of them contain fabulous Stories, and Relations which are apparently false and inconsistent with the Truth of History.

e Cano- al Books the Old and New Testament. II. The Rule of Faith and Manners therefore is only the Books of the Old and New Testament, which have always and by all Christians been reckon'd as Canonical. The Canonical Books of the Old Testament are, the five Books of *Moses*, call'd the *Pentateuch*; the Book of *Joshua*; the Books of *Judges* and *Ruth*, formerly join'd together; the two Books of *Samuel*; the two Books of *Kings*; the two Books of *Chronicles*; the two Books of *Ezra*; the Book of *Esther*, that of *Job*; the *Psalms*; the *Proverbs*; *Ecclesiastes*, and *Canticles* of *Solomon*; the four greater, and the twelve minor Prophets. These are all the Books which were admitted into the *Jewish* Canon, and afterwards own'd by the Primitive Christians as the only Canonical. They are divided by several Authors into various Classes, but our Saviour distinguishes them into three, the *Law* of *Moses*, the *Prophets*, and the *Psalms*.

The Canonical Books of the New Testament are, the four *Gospels*, the *Acts* of the Apostles, the fourteen *Epistles* of St. *Paul*, the Epistle of St. *James*, the two Epistles of St. *Peter*, the three of St. *John*, that of St. *Jude*, and the *Apocalypse* or *Revelation*. All these were very early receiv'd into the Canon by the Christian

Christian Church *, tho some of them were doubted of at first, viz. the second Epistle of St. Peter, the second and third of St. John, the Epistle to the Hebrews, the Epistle of St. James, and of St. Jude, and the Apocalypse of St. John. But upon full enquiry it was found that they were Canonical, and pen'd by Men inspir'd by the Holy Ghost.

Some of the Moderns † have look'd upon the Epistle of St. James to be spurious, because they suppos'd that therein St. James disagrees with St. Paul in the Doctrine of Justification; the Former saying that a Man is not justify'd by Faith alone, but by Works also; whereas the Latter declares that a Man is justify'd by Faith without the Works of the Law. How far these Apostles may be reconcil'd, and clear'd from this seeming Contradiction, we shall have occasion to shew more largely hereafter in its proper place ||, and therefore shall wave that Dispute at present.

S E C T. II.

Of the Authority of the Holy Scripture.

I. That the Rule of our Faith and Religion is the Books of the Old and New Testament, or the Holy Scripture, we have already declar'd; and are next to evince the Authority of this Rule, which depends on the Truth and Divinity of those Writings. To say that they are the Word of God, is a sufficient Proof of their Truth and Divinity, to an honest and humble Mind; but having to deal with Men of perverse Spirits, risen up in these last Ages, we are forc'd to produce other Evidences for the Authority of those sacred Books. As to those of the Old Testament, we shall not con-

* In the Council of Laodicea held between the Years 360, and 370.

† Upon this Account Luther question'd the Authority of it; and one of his Followers, Andreas Althamerus, proceeded so far as to say, *Jacobum mentiri in Caput suum.*

|| Book VI. Chap. 4. concerning Justification.

cern our selves in proving the Authority of them; since the Law of *Moses* which was promulgated by God himself, and the Predictions of that and other succeeding Prophets of future Events which afterwards came exactly to pass, carry along with them such Convictions of Truth and Divinity, as cannot reasonably be deny'd. Besides, the Authors of the New Testament bear Testimony to those of the Old; so that we need only prove the Truth and Divinity of the Writings of the one, in order to support the Authority of the other.

I. The
truth of
the Wri-
tings of
the New
Testament.

II. To demonstrate the Truth of any History, two things are requisite; First, that its Author could; and then, that he would write nothing but what was true. Now that both these Qualifications are in the highest degree to be met with in the Writers of the New Testament, we shall evince by what follows.

arg. 1.
The Au-
thors of
them capa-
ble of wri-
ting what
is true.

First then, they could, or were capable of writing what was true, since they did not pretend to give us an account of Transactions done in remote Countries, or that had happen'd some Ages before their time; but only of such as occur'd on the very Spot, such as they were Eye and Ear-witnesses of, and had all the Evidence for, that could be desir'd from sensible Demonstrations*. *Matthem*, and *John* were the Apostles and constant Attendants of Jesus Christ, *Luke* was a Disciple of our Saviour, *Mark* the Companion of St. *Peter*; and consequently all of them capable of relating truly what concern'd the Life, Miracles, Doctrine, &c. of their great Master. And for St. *Paul*, the chief Writer of what is contain'd in the New Testament, he declares that he receiv'd not the Gospel by Man, but by God.

See
Joh. 1.
3.
Pet. 1.

II. I. I.

arg. 2.
They would
write no-
thing but
truth.

Thus much may serve to shew the Ability of the Writers of the New Testament for penning what was Truth; and that they would write nothing else appears from hence: (1.) They were Men of such mean and illiterate Parts, as not to be capable of imposing a Falsity upon so wise and understanding an Age, who would soon have been capable of discovering the Imposture, if there had been any such. (2.) They were Men of Probity and Piety, who abominated a Lye, and look'd upon it by the Laws of their

their Religion, as a Crime prohibited under the pain of Damnation: So that consequently a Man must be bereft of all his Sense and Reason, that can think they would obtrude upon the World a Falshood, whereby they could reap no advantage of Pleasure, Profit or Honour in this World; but on the contrary, were expos'd to the losing of all these, nay even of Life it self, for being Preachers of the Doctrine of the Cross, and bearing witness to the Truth of a crucify'd *Jesus*. Add to this, as a Testimony of their Sincerity, their not concealing those Faults of their own, which they might very easily have done; such as *Peter's* denying his Master, and prevaricating with the *Jews* and *Gentiles*, the Apostles contending for Superiority, the hot Contention between *Barnabas* and *Paul*, and the like. All these things, I say, they might have pass'd over in silence, as being known to none but themselves; but they lov'd the Truth better than to smother these Failings, and at the same time have inform'd us how liable even the best of Men are to Passion and the other Infirmities of Human Nature, from which the very Elect are not freed during their Abode in this World.

Against what we have hitherto advanc'd concerning the Truth of the Writings of the New Testament, we are sensible that two Objections may be started: *First*, What Security have we that they belong to those Authors under whose Names they are inscrib'd? And *Secondly*, How do we know but they have been adulterated? To the first of these Queries we briefly answer, That we are assur'd of the Genuineness of these Books by the constant Tradition of those who liv'd in the Times when they were written, as also of such as immediately succeeded them, who after a strict and nice Inquiry determin'd them to be Genuine, whilst upon the same Disquisition they rejected several others that went under those Authors Names, as spurious. To the second Query we reply, that it lies upon the Objectors to prove their Assertion, which neither the Multitude of Copies to be met with in all Languages can evince, and of which the Providence of God has taken so much care, that no Corruption has crept into the Text but what has been detected; and as for the

Two Objections answered.

various Readings, they make nothing to the point in question, as any Man of Learning may easily discern.

2. *The Divinity of the Holy Scripture* may be prov'd by several Arguments. (1.) Because the Preachers of the Doctrine contain'd in them profess that they receiv'd it from God himself, as appears from several Places *. (2.) Because this their Doctrine was confirm'd by several Miracles and Signs following, which transcended the Power of any created Being. (3.) Because Jesus Christ, the Author of the Doctrine, confirm'd it by his Resurrection from the Dead, and Ascension into Heaven: This being the Test of the Truth of his Mission, and of his being the true Messiah, to which he appeal'd †. (4.) The very History of the New Testament, and the Doctrine contain'd therein, have in their own nature the Character of Divinity stamp'd upon them: The One relating such wonderful Effects as we could never have known but by a Revelation from God; and the Other exhibiting such Precepts to be done, and such Promises to move us to the Practice of them, as none but God could prescribe or propose to us. (5.) Another Evidence for the Divinity of the Holy Scriptures, and the Doctrine contain'd particularly in the Writings of the New Testament, is the wonderful Efficacy of this Doctrine. If we consider the Persons by whom it was propagated, the Opposition it met with, and the spreading of the Gospel notwithstanding the Weakness of the One and the Power of the Other, we cannot but conclude that this Doctrine is of God. (6.) Lastly, the Apostles themselves make a Distinction between what was commanded by God, and what was their own private Opinions ||: So that this sufficiently evinces how careful they were not to obtrude any things upon the Church as Divine Precepts, which were not really such.

From what has been said on this Argument we may very fairly infer, That those Writings were pen'd by holy Men, who not only have not err'd, but also (as they were directed by the Spirit of God) could not err in declaring the Divine Will to us. They did not write what they pleas'd, but as they were mov'd, inspir'd,

spir'd, and directed by the Holy Ghost, according to 2 Pet. 1. the concurrent Testimony of St. Peter and St. Paul. 21. From hence likewise it is plain that the *Authority* of 2 Tim. 3. the Holy Scripture depends upon the Truth and Divi- 16. nity of it, and not upon the *Tradition of the Church*, as the *Romanists* contend. For tho we pay all just deference to the Tradition of the Primitive Church, and own that by this means we learn such and such Books to belong to such or such an Author; yet we cannot allow the Church to determine whether they are divinely inspir'd or no, this must be prov'd by a greater Authority, viz. from the Veracity and Divinity of those Writings themselves. The Church owes its Being and Authority to the Scripture; and to say, that the Authority of the Scripture depends upon the Church, is running about in a Circle, proving just nothing, and will never convince or convert an Infidel to the Christian Faith.

S E C T. III.

Of the Perfection of the Holy Scripture.

The next thing to be treated of is the *Perfection* of *Wherein* this Rule of Faith. By this we understand, that *the Perfe* whatsoever is necessary for us to know, believe, hope *tion of t* for and practise in order to Salvation, is fully con- *Holy Scri* tain'd in the Holy Scripture; so that no Opinion or *ture con-* Doctrine is to be reckon'd as necessary, which is not *sists.* contain'd therein. For the better comprehending this our Assertion, we shall lay it down in the following Propositions.

First, We say that all things *necessary* to Salva- *All thin* tion are contain'd in the Holy Scripture. Not that *necessary* we pretend that every thing therein compris'd is ne- *Salvatio* cessary to Salvation; some things there are which *contain'a* are absolutely necessary, others are only useful to *the Scr* that end: and of these last some are of more, some *ture :* of less Consequence, according as they have more or less Relation to the things which are necessary.

Secondly,

But after *Secondly*, we say, that even those things which are necessary to Salvation are not always deliver'd in Scripture after the same manner. Some are declar'd in express terms to be necessary, as when 'tis said, *He that believeth and is baptiz'd shall be sav'd, but he that believeth not shall be damn'd, &c.* Whilst others are not expressly set down, but may by a natural and self-evident Deduction and Consequence be prov'd to be necessary to any one who is capable and willing to make a right use of his Reason.

There are two sorts of Men, who oppose what we have asserted; viz. First the *Libertines* or *Enthusiasts*, who deny the Scripture to be that Divine Word, which contains all things necessary to Salvation; and say that 'tis the *Word within*, inspir'd immediately by God into the Minds of Men, which is the perfect Word. Secondly the *Romanists*, who do indeed own the Doctrine deliver'd by Christ and his Apostles to be perfect and sufficient to Salvation; but then deny that their whole Doctrine is contain'd in the Scriptures. They tell us that several things necessary to Salvation were deliver'd by them *viva Voce* to the Church; and therefore besides the Scripture they have establish'd several unwritten Traditions of the Apostles, preserv'd and transmitted to us by the Church, the Observation of which they hold to be necessary to Salvation.

Now for a full Refutation of both these Opinions, and the Confirmation of our own concerning the Perfection of the Holy Scriptures, we shall prove three things: (1.) That *Jesus Christ* reveal'd to his Apostles all things which were every where, at all times, and to all Persons necessary to Salvation. (2.) That the Apostles faithfully preach'd them to the Church: And (3.) That they committed them to Writing in those sacred Books, which we call the *Scripture*. The two first of these are properly oppos'd to the *Enthusiasts*; the third to both, and particularly the *Romanists*. After this we shall consider and answer the Objections brought by them against what we advance.

As to the first of the Particulars to be prov'd, it is evident from Scripture that all things which were every where, at all Times, and to all Persons necessary to Salvation, were reveal'd to the Apostles by *Jesus Christ* and

and by the *Holy Ghost* *. From the same Scriptures * Joh. 15. 'tis likewise manifest that both *Jesus Christ* and the 15. Id. 17. *Holy Ghost* knew all things †; and that all things which 14, 17, 22. were necessary to be believ'd and practis'd to the End of Id. 14. 26. the World were clearly reveal'd by them ||. Hence it Id. 16. 13. is that the Gospel is stil'd, 2 Cor. 3. 11. *The Word which* † Joh. 1. *endureth for ever*, in opposition to the Law which 8. Col. 1. was abolish'd, and gave place to a more perfect Re- 15. Id. 2. velation. 9. 1 Cor.

It is likewise as plain from Scripture, that the Apo- 2. 10, 11. stles as faithfully deliver'd to the Church all things ne- || Matt. 28 cessary to Salvation, which were reveal'd to them *; Joh. 17. for the Truth of which St. Paul in particular appeals 19, 20. to the Elders of *Ephesus* †, and to the *Corinthians* ||. * Mar. 15 And this might be prov'd from several other Passages 20. in the *New Testament*, wherein the Gospel is stil'd, † Act. 20 *The Word of Salvation, the Word of Life, the Saviour* 26, 27. *of Life unto Life*, and the like *. || 1 Cor.

As to our third Assertion, viz. That the Apostles 15. 2. committed those reveal'd Truths to Writing in those * Act. 15; sacred Books, which we call the Scripture; and that 26. -- 5. 20 there is contain'd whatever is necessary to be known, 2 Cor. 2. 16. believ'd and practis'd in order to Salvation; this we shall prove against the *Romanists unwritten Tradition* by the following Arguments. First, there is nothing necessary to Salvation, except *Faith in Jesus Christ which worketh by Love*; but this is fully set forth by the Scripture; so that whoever believes what is written therein, may attain to everlasting Life. Secondly, the holy Penmen have not only deliver'd in the Scripture things necessary to Salvation, but likewise have committed many other things to Writing which were only useful, and some of them of no great use, at present; therefore it cannot be suppos'd that they should omit any of those things that were absolutely necessary, who were to instruct Men in all things. Thirdly, it may be said, that the *Romanists* are not able to produce one Doctrine necessary to be believ'd, nor one Duty necessary to be practis'd, in order to Salvation, but what is fully contain'd in the Holy Scripture. As for their unwritten Traditions, they cannot prove by any one Argument, that what is deliver'd in them, is necessary to be believ'd and practis'd; as might be easily

easily evinc'd by taking a full View of all of them, were it not too tedious, and contrary to the Brevity we intend.

Having thus proved the *Perfection of the Holy Scripture*, we shall now proceed to consider and answer the Arguments which the *Libertines* and *Romanists* make use of in defence of their Notions: we shall only take notice of the most considerable.

An Answer to the Libertines Objections. In the first place, the *Libertines* or *Enthusiasts* argue from the *Nature of the Divine Word*. The Word of God, say they, is eternal, and the very Essence of God; and therefore eternal and incorruptible, and cannot be inscrib'd on corruptible Paper.

To this we answer, That it is absurd to say that the Word of God is the very Essence of God, since it is an Act of the Divine Free-will, which ought to be distinguish'd from its Essence: That it is properly the Revelation of the Divine Mind, whether declar'd by external Speech or by Writing: And that neither of these Ways of manifesting the Will of God, can render the Word unstable, ineffectual, or void of Spirit and Life; since both Writing and Speaking are only the Mediums of conveying and imparting the Divine Mind to us.

The Explication of Joh. 6. 45. The other Argument made use of by the *Libertines* or *Enthusiasts*, is taken from several Passages of Scripture, which they apply to strengthen their Notion of the *internal Word*: The chief of which Places are;

(1.) Joh. 6. 45. *They shall all be taught of God.* To this we answer, first, that *Διδασκοι Θεῷ*, signifies properly, not the being taught by God; but the being instructed concerning God, that is, they should have a right Knowledge of the Divine Will contain'd in the Law; which Interpretation the following Words do justify. But secondly, suppose it should be read, *Taught by God*, yet it does not from thence follow that they should be taught immediately by him, since they who are instructed by the means of his Ministers, may very well be said to be taught by God.

Luke 17. 20. (2.) Another Place the *Libertines* produce is, Luke 17. 20. *The Kingdom of God cometh not with Observation; behold the Kingdom of God is within you.*

It is therefore, say they, spiritual and internal. To this we reply, that the *Kingdom* of God cannot in this place in any tolerable Sense be understood to signify the *Word* of God, but the *Kingdom* of the *Messiah*, which is truly spiritual, and leads us to heavenly things; tho it was to appear externally and visibly, not indeed with Observation, that is, with external Pomp, but by the Presence of its King, and by the external Promulgation and Propagation of his Word, viz. the Gospel. By its being said that *the Kingdom of God is within you*, is not meant that it is only internal, and in your Hearts, but in the midst of you, or among you.

(3.) As to the other place which they alledg, viz. Heb. 8. Heb. 8. 8, 9, 10, 11. To this we answer, (1.) That 8—11. this is a Promise relating to the times of the *Messiah*, but that he taught Men by the outward Word. (2.) 'Tis there promis'd that they should have the Law written in their Hearts, yet this could not be done, but by means of the outward Word which expounded the meaning of the Law to them. (3.) This Promise does not extend so much to the writing the Sense of the Law on their Hearts, as to the manner of inscribing it by such great Favours as should excite in Men a Love of the Divine Law.

(4.) The last Passage produc'd by the *Enthusiasts* 2 Cor. 3. in favour of their Opinion is, 2 Cor. 3. 6. *The Letter killeth, but the Spirit giveth Life.* To this I reply, that here the Term *Letter* does not denote the Scripture of the New Testament, as committed to writing; but the *Law* of *Moses*, in opposition to the *Gospel*. It is call'd the *Letter*, as containing the Rudiments of Religion, and not perfect Religion; it is said *to kill*, because the Transgressors thereof were guilty of Death, without the Promise of Remission. On the other hand, the *Gospel* is stil'd the *Spirit*, as being endu'd with a spiritual and quickning Virtue, by which it was able to raise Men dead in Trespasses and Sins to the Newness of a spiritual Life, that so they might *walk no longer after the Flesh, but after the Spirit.*

The *Romanists* have variety of Arguments by which they pretend to maintain their Opinion. Their first
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An Answer to the Objections of the Papists. fort of Arguments are those by which they endeavour to prove the Insufficiency of the Scriptures; and to this purpose they first of all alledg two Texts, viz. *Joh. 16. 12. and Joh. 21. 25.* which upon serious Examination will be found to mean nothing less than what they would have them: the former Passage relating only to those things which *Jesus Christ* promis'd to reveal to his Apostles after his Resurrection, concerning the Nature of his Kingdom; the latter relating only to his Miracles, which *John* says were *so many that the whole World could not contain the Books that should be written of them*: but neither of these Places denote the things that were necessary to Salvation.

That the Canon of the Scripture is entire. As to what they say, that the Scriptures cannot contain all Doctrines sufficient to Salvation, because many holy and truly Canonical Books are lost, such as the Books of *Nathan* the Prophet and *Gad* the Seer, of *Abijah* the *Shilonite* and *Iddo* the Seer, the Parables and Songs of *Solomon*, with some others in the Old and New Testament: To this we answer, (1.) That they cannot prove those Books (which they mention) to have been lost, since the Books of *Nathan*, *Gad*, *Abijah* and *Iddo*, are certainly compris'd in the Books of *Samuel* and the *Kings*. Nor does *St. Paul* mention any Epistle sent to the *Laodiceans*, but one written from *Laodicea*, which was the first to *Timothy* sent from that place. (2.) That supposing some of the Sacred Writings were lost, it lies upon the *Romanists* to prove, before they charge the Scripture with Imperfection, that there were some things contain'd in them necessary to Salvation, which are not in the Books we have. But this they can never do, and Reason it self is against them: For how can it be imagin'd that God, who is so tender a Lover of Mankind, should permit any Books to be lost, which contain'd such things necessary to Salvation, as could no where else be found? So that notwithstanding the *Papists* Objections, the Canon of the Holy Scripture is entire, tho some of the Books they mention be lost, since those we have contain in them all things necessary to Salvation.

In defence of their *unwritten Traditions*, the *Romanists* first of all produce some Texts of Scripture, wherein

wherein Traditions are expressly commended, viz. *What for of Traditions the Scripture commend.*
1 Cor 11. 2, 23, 34. 2 Theff. 2. 15. 1 Tim. 6. 20.

To this we reply; 1. That *Tradition* signifies a certain Communication of the Christian Doctrine, by what way soever it be, whether by Writing or by Word of Mouth, as appears, *2 Theff. 2. 15.* And tho the Apostle should have instructed some Churches *viva Voce*, yet it does not follow that what he taught, was not written by him nor other Apostles, in any other of his or their Epistles. 2. *Traditions* are either necessary to Salvation, or they are not; if they are not, we have no dispute about them: If they are, it lies upon our Adversaries to shew that they were never written by any one of the Apostles. 'Tis therefore very likely that *St. Paul* has an Eye to those Traditions which relate to the well-government of the Church in several things; which tho not necessary to Salvation, yet might be of great use to us, provided they were handed down to us by a continued and uninterrupted Tradition.

Another Argument the *Romanists* make use of in favour of their *Traditions*, is, That 'tis necessary to Salvation to have a Genuine Canon of the Scriptures, but this we cannot have without Tradition; therefore, &c. To this we answer, (1.) That 'tis not absolutely necessary to Salvation to have a Genuine Canon of the Scriptures in that sense they take it: *i. e.* A Man may have a true Canon of the Scripture, tho he is ignorant of some Books that are in the Canon; provided in those Books which he does know, he meets with all those things that are necessary to Salvation. And, (2.) when we oppose Traditions, we do not mean those which depend on sensible and experimental Knowledge, such as the Tradition by which we come to understand who were the Authors of the Sacred Writings: but only those which are known by a special Revelation, whereby 'tis pretended that God has reveal'd to some Men those things that are necessary to be believ'd and practis'd by all in order to Salvation, which yet he would not permit the sacred Pen-men to commit to writing; and which they would have all Christians every where and always to look upon as Apostolical, and of the same Authority with the Books which go
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under the Apostles Names. Against such sort of Traditions as these, it is that we declare our selves, as being the Inventions of Men, and impos'd upon the Church after a tyrannical manner by the See of Rome.

S E C T. IV.

Of the Perspicuity of the Holy Scripture.

The Perspicuity of the Holy Scripture.

Having in the preceding Section discours'd at large of the *Perfection*, we are in this to treat of the *Perspicuity* of the Rule of our Faith and Manners. By this we mean, that all things which are necessary for us to believe, hope for, and practise in order to Salvation, are clearly and plainly contain'd in the Holy Scripture, so as to be sufficiently understood by any Man who has and makes a right use of his Reason: Not that we pretend that all things contain'd in Sacred Writ. are plain and perspicuous; since by our Ignorance of the Original Languages wherein they were pen'd, and of the Customs of the *Jews* and others, to which some Passages allude, or upon the account of the Sublimeness of the Matter they treat of, or for some other reason, there may have been, and still are many Places hard to be understood. But this we affirm, that this Obscurity, how much soever it may affect things of lesser Consequence, yet does not reach to those that are absolutely necessary to Salvation, which tho they may in some places be obscurely deliver'd, yet in others are very plainly and intelligibly express'd. So that there is no need of the Magisterial Interpretation of the Church, in order to apprehend the full Sense and Meaning of the Holy Scripture in all things that are necessary to Salvation; but 'tis only requisite that a Man bring a Mind free from all Prejudice and Passion to the perusal thereof.

Arguments to prove it.

That there is such a *Perspicuity* and Clearness, as we have been describing, in the Sacred Writings, is evident from the following Arguments.

Arg. I.

First, from several Passages in the Old and New Testament, which give their Attestation to this *Perspicuity*.

spicuity. Such as for instance in the Old Testament, are *Deut.* 30. 11, 12, 13, 14. *Psal.* 19. 7, 8. 119. 105. and *Prov.* 6. 23. And in the New Testament, Christ *Joh. 1.* is called *the Light, the Light of the World, enlightning* 8. 12. *every Man coming into the World:* And the Apostles *Acts 13* are stil'd *the Light of the Gentiles, which should open* 47. *their Eyes, and turn them from Darkness to Light, &c.* 26. 18.

Secondly, All Men are bound to believe the Doc- *Arg. 2.* trines which are necessary to Salvation, under the Penalty of eternal Death and Damnation. Therefore all those Doctrines are clearly and perspicuously contain'd in the Holy Scripture, that they may be intelligible to all who read it. For no Man can be oblig'd to give his Assent to obscure and doubtful Doctrines, to the certain knowledg of which he cannot attain; no more than he is oblig'd to obey a Law that is not promulgated, or one that is publish'd, but in such obscure Terms, as cannot be understood. Nor can any Man be liable to Punishment, much less to that which is eternal, for the non-observance of an obscure and unintelligible Law.

Thirdly, If the Scripture be obscure in those Arti- *Arg. 3.* cles which are necessary to Salvation, it is because the Holy Ghost either could not, or would not reveal his Mind more clearly: To assert which is most notoriously absurd and blasphemous. 'Tis Blasphemy in the highest sense of the Word, to say, that the Holy Ghost could not reveal his Mind more clearly, since Men every day arrogate to themselves the Power of illustrating the obscure places of Scripture by their own Interpretations. And 'tis no less reflecting to say that he would not reveal his Mind more clearly; since this is to suppose that he left Men in the dark as to the Means of attaining eternal Life, and put them under a Necessity of falling into eternal Death.

Fourthly and lastly, The things which are necessary *Arg. 4.* to Salvation were every where and always understood and believ'd after the same manner; by all those who bore a due respect to the Holy Scripture; therefore they were clearly express'd therein. For if there had been the least Obscurity in those things, there would not have been so unanimous a Consent in the understanding of them among all Christians, who yet dissen-

ted very much from one another in many other Things.

Answer the Pa-
ts Objec-
ns. Having by these Arguments, which we look upon to be conclusive, prov'd the Perspicuity of the Holy Scripture; let us now hear what the *Romanists* have to object against it.

And first of all they argue from several places of Scripture, which seem to hint at its Obscurity.

ie Explan-
tion of
al. 119.
34. The first Place they produce is *Psal. 119. 18, 34. Open thou mine Eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of thy Law: Give me Understanding, and I shall keep thy Law.* From hence they infer, that if *David*, who was a Prophet, begg'd of God the Knowledge of his Law, then the Scripture is obscure. To this we answer, that *David* doth not there pray for the understanding of things necessary to Salvation, since being exercised in the Law of God Day and Night, and, as he himself in this very *Psalms* testifies, *being wiser than his Teachers and his Antients*, he could not be ignorant of these things: But what he prays for, is, that God would give him an Insight into the Mysteries of his Law, especially how it could be consistent with the Justice of God, that the Good, to whom the Law promis'd Blessings, should sometimes suffer Adversity, whilst the Wicked, threaten'd by the same Law with Cursings, were prosperous.

Luke
1. 54. Another Text which they alledg to this purpose, is *Luk. 24. 54. Then he, i. e. Jesus, open'd their Understanding*, that is the Apostles, *that they might understand the Scriptures*: tho he had convers'd with and taught them for three years together before. To this we answer; That in this place the Discourse is concerning the understanding the Prophecies, wherein the Coming and Office of Christ as Saviour was foretold; and especially such Prophecies as related to the Passion, Death and Resurrection of Christ, as is evident by the preceding and following Verses. And tho the Knowledge of these things were necessary to the Apostles in the discharge of their Office for the Conviction of the *Jews*; yet it was not simply necessary for the Knowledge of Christ: that is, a Man might by only reading the New Testament arrive to a saving Knowledge of Christ, tho he did not fully comprehend the meaning of the Prophecies that refer'd to Christ. A

A third Passage which they produce, is *Acts* 8. Of *Acts* 30, 31. where *Philip* asks the Eunuch, *Understandest thou what thou readeſt?* And he ſaid, *How can I, except ſome Man ſhould guide me?* To this the ſame Answer may ſuffice that was given to the former Text, viz. That the ſenſe of the Place does not reach to things neceſſary to be known in order to eternal Salvation, but only to the underſtanding of ſome one Prophecy that related to Chriſt: Nor is it ſtrange that the Eunuch ſhould not underſtand the Meaning of this Prophecy, ſince every Prophecy before it be fulfill'd, or known to be ſo, is obſcure.

The laſt Text which the *Romaniſts* produce, is *2 Pet.* Of *2 Pet.* 3. 16. where *St. Peter* ſays that in the *Epistles of Paul* 3. 16. there are ſome things hard to be underſtood, which they that are unlearned and unſtable wreſt, as they do alſo the other Scriptures, to their own Deſtruction. Now 'tis eaſy to perceive that *St. Peter* does not mean the *Epistles of St. Paul*, but ſome things contain'd in them, particularly ſuch as related to Chriſt's coming to Judgment; and that theſe and ſuch like things were hard to be underſtood, we very readily grant.

Befides theſe Texts which they alledg as a Proof of *The Roman* the Obſcurity of Scripture, they deduce another Argument, taken, as they ſay, from the Teſtimony of their Adverſaries, which runs thus: If the Scripture be ſo clear, the Proteſtants would not have written ſo many Commentaries, not only different from, but alſo contrary and repugnant to one another. To this we answer, (1.) That there are indeed many Obſcurities in Scripture, which need an Interpretation; but we deny that they contain in them any Doctrine neceſſary to Salvation; or if they do, we ſay that it is elſewhere clearly expreſſ'd. (2.) We likewiſe own that Commentators, blinded with Prejudice, Paſſion, or ſome other evil Diſpoſition, may obſcure even the cleareſt Places. (3.) But yet how wide a Difference ſoever there may be among Interpreters, there is little or none between them with reſpect to thoſe things that are abſolutely neceſſary to Salvation.

The *Romaniſts* are not the only Perſons who plead for the Obſcurity of the Scripture; but ſome, if not all the *Contra-Remonſtrants*, maintain as much, tho

not in exprefs Terms, yet by way of Consequence. They do indeed hold, in oppofition to the *Papifts*, the Perfpicuity of the Scripture in all things neceffary to Salvation, but then they lay this Reftriction upon it, *viz.* That the Scriptures confider'd in themfelves are clear and perfpicuous, but our Underftanding is fo blind and deprav'd, that it cannot comprehend the Meaning of them without the fpecial Illumination of the Holy Ghoft. Now upon a full enquiry it will be found that thefe Men do not differ from the *Papifts*, but only in this, that the latter attribute this Illumination of the Holy Ghoft to the Pope alone, whilft the former afcribe it in common to all the Elect. It would be to no purpofe to fhew the Abfurdity of this their Notion, fince it is felf-evident, and we fhall have occafion to refute it hereafter.

From what has been faid of the Perfpicuity of the Holy Scripture, we think fit to draw this Inference; That in explaining the Articles of Faith which are neceffary to be believ'd, no Man is tied up to the ufe of fuch Words and Exprefions as are not contain'd in the Holy Scripture, but are only of Human Invention: for fince the Scripture clearly contains all things neceffary to Salvation, the Words and Exprefions thereof are fufficient to explain what is thus neceffary to Salvation. Nor is it to be fuppos'd that any properer Words or Exprefions could be invented to declare the Mind of God, than thofe which he has been pleas'd to ufe in the Scripture. However by this we do not intend, but that Men may make ufe of other Phrafes, than thofe contain'd in the Scriptures, in explaining the Articles of Faith; for the Learned of all Perfuaſions have done it: But this we fay, that the Scripture is clear enough of it felf, and is its own beſt Interpreter; and the leſs Men vary from the Terms of Scripture, the more intelligible they are like to render it, and the things contain'd in it: Whilft on the other hand, if Men affect new Terms, and fuch as are unſcriptural, they often obſcure and render the plainest Truths in Scripture unintelligible.

C H A P. IV.

Of the Use of the Holy Scriptures.

HAVING in the preceding Chapter treated of the Attributes of the Holy Scripture, viz. Its Canon, Authority, Perfection, and Perspicuity; we shall in this treat of its Use, wherein three things offer themselves to our Consideration: First, The Reading of it. Secondly, its Version into the vulgar Languages: And Thirdly, the Interpretation thereof. Of these we shall discourse in distinct Sections, with some other Matters relating to this Subject.

S E C T. I.

That the Scripture ought to be read promiscuously by all the Faithful.

As to the reading of the Scripture, forasmuch as *The Scripture* it perfectly and perspicuously contains all things necessary to Salvation, it hence follows that it ought to be read by all Men without Distinction. But since this is deny'd by the *Romanists* to all their Lay-Members, who are not permitted the reading of the Scripture, but under several Restrictions, we think fit to prove our Assertion by these several Arguments.

First of all we have the express Command of God for it, which renders the reading of the Scripture not only lawful, but also necessary, as appears from the following Texts; *Deut.* 6. 6, 7, 8, 9. *Ibid.* Ch. 31. 11, 12, 13. *Ibid.* Ch. 17. 18, 19. *Josh.* 1. 7, 8. *Joh.* 7. 39. and *Coloss.* 3. 16. 1. From the Command of God.

Secondly, The End for which the Holy Scripture was given us by God, proves the same thing; since the End and Design thereof is nothing else but that we come to the Knowledge of those things that are written, believe what we know, and by this means attain everlasting life. 2. From the End for which the Scripture was indited.

lasting Life. This is evident from these Passages, viz. Luke 1. 3, 4. Joh. 20. 31. 2 Tim. 3. 17. Coloss. 4. 16. and 1 Theff. 5. 27.

From Com- Thirdly, To this we may add the Commendations
ndations that are given of the Holy Scripture, as its being stil'd
en of the the Word of Life*; the Power of God unto Salvation, to
ipture. every one that believes †; the Sword of the Spirit ||. From all which, and other Places, we may conclude,
Joh. 1. that they who deny the *Lairy* the reading of the
Rom. 1. Scripture, are willing to expose them naked and unarm-
ph. 6. ed to the Snares and Deceits of that Enemy, who
like a roaring Lion goeth about, seeking whom he may
devour.

From Praises Fourthly, Those are praised and pronounc'd Blessed,
en to who are constant in the reading of the Holy Scriptures.
m that Thus for instance the Man is declared *Blessed*, who me-
d it. ditates on the Law of the Lord day and night*. *Mary*
sal. 1. 2. is pronounced Blessed by our Lord, because being at-
luk. 10. tentive to his Words, she had chosen the one thing
needful †. Again, the *Bereans* are said to be more
ets 17. noble than those in *Thessalonica*, in that they search'd
the Scriptures daily, to know whether the things
ets 18. taught them by *Paul* were so or not ||. *Apollos* is stil'd
a mighty Man in the Scriptures*: And *Timothy* is prais'd
Tim. for having known the Scriptures from a Child †.
15. From all this we may safely infer with *St. Peter*, that
since we have such a sure Word of Prophecy, we would
do well to take heed thereunto, 2 Epist. 1. 19.

From Prac- Fifthly and lastly, The prevailing Custom of the
of the Jews in this matter, who were constant Perusers of
vs. the Law, who read and preached what *Moses* taught
them every Sabbath-Day in their Synagogues, does e-
vince the promiscuous Use of the Scriptures indifferently
by All to be a Duty. Nay at present the *Jews*, tho a
scatter'd People, are very diligent in turning over their
Scriptures, and by this their Diligence may very justly
shame some *Christians* for their notorious Neglect.

Objec- It is then a foolish and trifling Evasion of the *Roma-*
an- nists who say, That since Abundance of Errors and
red. Heresies may be imbibed by Men who do not read the
Scripture as they should; therefore the reading of it
indifferently by All is not to be allowed. For this
is not to be imputed to the Scriptures, but to the Fault
of

of the Readers. 'Tis necessary for all Men to read the Scripture, since it contains those things, without the believing and observing of which, eternal Salvation cannot be obtain'd. It would therefore be altogether as reasonable to debar Men wholly from the Use of Meats and Drinks, because some there are who by Intemperance abuse both; as it is to deny them the Reading of the Scripture, because many by their own Fault may abuse it.

S E C T. II.

Of Translating the Holy Scripture into the Vulgar Tongues.

Whereas the Scripture is to be read promiscuously by all Men for the Reasons assign'd in the preceding Section; it thence necessarily follows, that since All Men are not so well skill'd as to understand the *Hebrew* and *Greek* Text in which it was originally written, it ought to be translated into the Language which is peculiar to each Nation. True it is, this is not *absolutely necessary*, but only *accidentally* so, arising from the Slothfulness of Men; who if they would use the same Diligence to become the Heirs of eternal Life and Happiness, as they do to purchase an Estate or some other worldly Enjoyment, might all of them attain to a Capacity of reading the Scripture in the Original Language. But since this cannot be expected, how much soever it may be recommended, a Translation of the Bible into the Vulgar Tongues is requisite, that so all Men may read and understand what they read, from the greatest Scholar down to the most illiterate Peasant.

And this is recommended by the Practice of the Church in all Ages, which has translated the Scripture into several Languages, that it might be read by the Faithful of all Nations. Upon the first Establishment of Christianity, they had not only the *Greek* Version of the Old Testament done by the Seventy Interpreters, commonly called the *Septuagint*, but likewise various *Latin* Translations of the Old and New Testament

The Necessity of translating the Scriptures.

The Practice of the Church in this matter.

Testament. St. *Jerom* not only translated the Bible into *Latin*, but also into the *Sclavonian Tongue*; St. *Chrysostom* into *Armenian*; *Ulphilas* Bishop of the *Goths*, one of the *Nicene Council*, into the *Gothick*. The *Syriac* Version of the New Testament is very ancient. Nay the *Romanists* themselves allow the *Armenians*, *Russians*, *Ethiopians*, *Sclavonians* and *Muscovites* to read the Scripture in their own Tongue. Add to this, that Mr. *Du Pin* a profess'd Papist, and a Doctor of the *Sorbonne*, is not only of the Opinion, that all the Faithful ought to be allow'd the Reading of the Scripture, but also that it ought to be translated into the vulgar Tongues; this he prosecutes at large in the ninth Chapter of his first Volume of the *History of the Canon and Writers of the Old and New Testament*, lately publish'd in *English*, to which we refer the Reader.

But notwithstanding the Necessity of such Translations, the Practice of the *Christian Church*, and the Concession of the *Sorbonne* Doctor, yet the Papists have several things to object against it, which require, a brief and distinct Answer.

In the first place they object, "That the Scripture of the Old Testament, after the Return from the *Babylonish* Captivity, was not translated into the *Chaldaic* Language, tho the People by that long Captivity had forgotten their Mother-tongue; so that it was requisite for them to have some one to interpret the Text of Scripture to them, as is evident from *Neh. 8: 3, 8.*"

To this we answer, That the *Jews* had not altogether forgot their Mother-tongue; for it is not credible that a whole Nation, which retains its Language to this very day, should in the space of seventy Years quite forget it, especially considering that they lived among an impious and idolatrous People, profess'd Enemies to them, and Abhorrrers of them. No, 'tis more likely, that the *Hebrew* Tongue was transmitted down from Father to Son; and tho there might happen some Corruption in it by their long stay among the *Chaldeans*, yet in the main their Language continu'd the same. And the Place alledg'd does not say, that *Nehemiah* or others who read the Law to the People, explain'd the Text, but only the Sense of the Text to them; which might

might very well be done, tho they did understand the Language wherein it was written, since several obscure Places in the Text might stand in need of being illustrated to the meaner and more illiterate sort of *Jews*.

In the second place they argue, “ That the Apo- *Obj. 2.*
“ stles wrote the Scriptures only in the *Greek Tongue*.”

To this we reply, (1.) That this is very much ques- *Ans.*
tion’d with respect to some Books, such as *St. Matthew’s*
Gospel in particular, all the Antients * with one Con-
sent assuring us that he wrote in *Hebrew*. (2.) That the
reason why the others writ in *Greek* was, because that
Language was then spread over and understood by all
Nations; so that writing in that Tongue, they design’d
it not only for the Use of those to whom they wrote, but
also of all others who should meet with their Books.
But now that Reason ceases, when the *Greek Tongue* is
confin’d within the narrow Bounds of *Greece*, and the
Gospel is preach’d to such as have no knowledg of
that Language.

Thirdly they thus argue; “ If the Scripture ought *Obj. 3.*
“ to be translated into the vulgar Tongues, it is with
“ a Design that all the People should understand it;
“ but they cannot understand it, nor can the Learned
“ themselves fully comprehend it.”

Ans. (1.) They can at least understand those *Ans.*
things that are necessary to Salvation, which we have
already prov’d to be clearly contain’d in the Scrip-
ture. (2.) As to the understanding the other things not
absolutely necessary, they must not only read the Scrip-
tures, but also read them carefully, and pray to God
for his Spirit to enlighten their Understandings; and
if after this they should not comprehend some things,
this Ignorance will be no Hindrance to their Salva-
tion. (3.) If this Argument held good, then the Learned
themselves must not read the Holy Scripture, since,
as the *Romanists* say, they cannot understand it.

After all it must be said that no Version whatsoever
is of equal Authority with the Authenick *Hebrew* Text.

* Papias, *St. Irenæus*, Origen, Eusebius, *St. Cyril of Jeru-*
salem, *St. Jerom*, *St. Epiphanius*, *St. Chrysostom*, &c.

of the Old, and the *Greek* Text of the New Testament. Therefore it is an intolerable Imposition of the Council of *Trent*, which ordains and declares in the Decree of the 4th Session, *That the same antient and vulgar Latin Version which has been approv'd of and us'd in the Church for many Ages past, shall be esteem'd as the Authentick Version in all publick Lectures, Disputes, Sermons and Expositions, which no body shall presume to reject, under what Pretence soever.* This Decree exalts the *Vulgar Latin* above all other Versions, and makes it infallible, whereas the contrary is manifest. For neither is it so *Authentick* as they pretend, several Alterations having been made to it by Pope *Sixtus V.* and *Clement VIII.* since the Decree of that Council. Nor is it so *Antient* as to claim a Right to *Infallibility*.

But waving any farther Disputes with these Men, we shall now just hint at the Qualifications which are requisite for one that undertakes a Version of the Holy Scripture into any Language whatsoever. Now it is necessary that he should be a Man of *Learning* and *Fidelity*. In order to the former, it is requisite that he should have a full Knowledg not only of the *Hebrew* and *Greek* Tongues, but likewise of that into which he is to translate the Scriptures, that so he may render fully in another Language, what he has a right Notion of in the Original. As to his *Fidelity*, 'tis necessary, (1.) As far as possible, and as much as the Idiom of each Tongue will bear, to render it word for word, being religiously strict therein, and making no Additions to compleat the Sense, without some Mark or other to distinguish them from the Original Text. (2.) That he render those things ambiguously, which are ambiguous or doubtful in the Authentick Text, else he will turn a *Paraphrazer* instead of a *Translator*. And (3.) That above all things he take care, that he does not alter the Text, and soist in new Words, to patronize his own Sentiments, which the Authentick Text will not justify.

S E C T. III.

Of the Interpretation of the Holy Scripture.

By the Interpretation of the Holy Scripture, we understand the Illustration of its obscure Sense and Meaning: Which is not absolutely but accidentally necessary; since, as we have observ'd before, whatever is absolutely necessary to Salvation is clearly contain'd in the Holy Scripture, and a Man that reads it carefully and with an honest unprejudic'd Mind may attain to the Knowledge of it without an Interpreter. But however, since some things which are absolutely necessary to Salvation are in some Places express'd obscurely; and since there are many useful things set down with less Perspicuity than the necessary things are, there is with respect to these some need of an Interpretation.

Whatever the Causes are of the Obscurity of some Passages in Scripture, whether owing to the Unpreparedness, Unattention, or Inconsiderateness of the Reader; or whether it arises from the Sublimity of the Subjects treated on, or the manner of treating them; yet 'tis the Business of an Interpreter to give the true Sense of Scripture, such as may be most suitable to the Mind and Intention of God, who is the Fountain-head and Spring of all Truth.

The Schoolmen generally distinguish the Sense of Scripture into what is *Mystical* and what is *Literal*: And the *Mystical* Sense they subdivide into *Allegorical*, *Tropological*, and *Anagogical*. But without enquiring into the meaning of these School-terms, or whether this threefold Division of the *Mystical* Sense of Scripture be founded on sound Reason; we shall only observe, That the *Literal* Sense, such as the Words themselves do immediately import, is the proper and genuine Sense of Scripture: And the *Mystical* Sense affects not the whole, but only some Parts of it; nor is it properly the Sense of Scripture, but an extending of the *Literal* Sense to somewhat else besides what is precisely contain'd in the Letter, which God has propos'd and decreed to reveal in its due time.

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However this is certain, that under the *Literal* Senſe, eſpecially in the Prophecies, is frequently couch'd a *Myſtical* Senſe, relating to Chriſt and his Kingdom; the one fulfill'd of old in the *Type*, the other in the *Antitype*, *Chriſt Jeſus*. That therefore we may have a genuine Interpretation of the Prophecies, 'tis neceſſary to enquire in the firſt place after the *Literal* Senſe; and this being found, the *Type* muſt be apply'd to Chriſt.

'Tis true indeed, that ſometimes the Words of the Prophecy contain nothing in them extraordinary, but what was fully compleated in the *Type*; nor could we imagine that any *Myſtical* Senſe lay under them, had not the Holy Ghoſt been pleas'd in ſuch a Senſe to have refer'd them to the Times of our Saviour. Of this kind are the Words of *Iſaiah*, Ch. 9. 1, 2. ſpoken concerning the Deliverance of the *Jews* from the Oppreſſions of their Enemies, which *Matt.* 4. 15, 16. are refer'd to the freeing the *Galileans* and the Tribe of *Zabulon* from their ſpiritual Blindneſs, by *Jeſus Chriſt's* reſiding in their City *Capernaum*. Again, *Hof.* 11. 1. *Out of Egypt have I called my Son*, is ſpoken of the Delivering the People of *Iſrael* out of *Egypt*; which yet is apply'd, *Matt.* 2. 15. to the Flight of *Chriſt* into *Egypt*, from whence he was afterwards recall'd.

But ſometimes the Prophecies are expreſs'd in ſuch a noble Phraſe, that the Completion of them cannot but be very imperfect in the *Type*, and the Words muſt be taken in a narrow and improper Senſe before they can be applied thereto: which is a manifeſt Sign that God intended to promiſe ſome thing more noble by theſe Words, which he would afterwards in due time reveal; ſo that the Words themſelves incline us to ſeek after a more ſublime and myſtical Senſe. Of this nature are the Prophecies contain'd *Iſ.* 7. 14. and *Pſal.* 16. 10. The one relating to the Immaculate Conception of the Bleſſed Virgin, the other to the Reſurrection of *Jeſus Chriſt*; and neither of them fulfill'd but imperfectly in the *Type*.

However it cannot be ſaid that theſe ſorts of Prophecies are all of the ſame nature. For in ſome the two-fold Senſe is always obſerv'd, ſo that all the Parts of them are to be interpreted both *literally* and *myſtically*;

and this is what is common to most Prophecies. But then on the other hand, it sometimes happens, tho very rarely, that the Prophecy begins with the *Literal* and *Typical* Sense, and under a *Type* describes Christ; but as it goes on, it leaves the *Type*, and expressly and directly points out to us the *Antitype*, so that we are no longer to look after a twofold Meaning, but only one, which relates to Christ. Of this we have a noted Instance in the 53^d Chapter of *Isaiah*. For the Prophet in the preceding Chapter, under the *Type* of the *Jewish* Deliverance from the *Babylonish* Captivity, describes the spiritual Deliverance from the Servitude of Sin and Death by *Jesus Christ*: But at the End of that Chapter, leaving the *Type*, he begins directly to describe the *Antitype*, *Jesus Christ*, and carries it on through the whole 53^d Chapter, in such a strain, and in such Expressions, as cannot in any Sense whatsoever be apply'd to any other than our Lord.

By the observing of these and the like things, an Interpreter will not be so apt to mistake in the Interpretation of the Prophecies.

From what has been said, 'tis easy to perceive what we ought to think of their Opinion, who maintain, that the Words of Scripture in every place of it signify all that they can signify. If by this they mean, not every Word taken singly, but as they lie in the Context, and the Sense which the whole Series and Thred of Discourse requires; they are in the right, and we cannot but assent thereto. But then if they deny that there is any nobler Sense in the Words than what is barely *Literal*, against this we declare, and conclude against the *Jews*, that there are many things which were but imperfectly fulfill'd in the *Type*, and which had their full Completion in the *Antitype*, *Christ Jesus*.

After all it must be said, that tho some Places of Holy Scripture stand in need of Illustration, especially the Prophecies which contain in them a twofold Meaning, one *Literal* and the other *Mystical*; yet we are not tied to embrace the opinion of any one Interpreter, how learned soever he may be. For to be forc'd to subscribe to any one Man's Interpretation, is the greatest Tyranny that possibly can be laid on the Consciences

Consciences of Men; since 'tis a great hazard (no Man being infallible) that we may by so doing subscribe to an Error. But of this we shall discourse more at large in the next Section.

S E C T. IV.

Concerning an Universal Judg of Controversies relating to Faith.

Inter-ter con-er'd in a ublick and vate acity. But to treat more distinctly of the Interpretation of Scripture, we must consider in the next place in whom the Power of interpreting is lodg'd. Now an Interpreter is usually consider'd, either as he is a *publick*, or as he is a *private* Person. A *publick Interpreter* is one who has an Authority of determining all the Differences that may arise in the Interpretation of the Scripture, in whose Judgment all Men are bound to acquiesce: and a *private Interpreter* is one who interprets the Scripture for himself, and for the Direction of his own Conscience.

ether e is an ible g of trover- appoin- in the ch. Now the only question is, whether God has appointed such a publick and visible Judg of Controversies of Faith in the Church? The *Papists* maintain the *Affirmative*: but since they are not agreed in whom this Authority is lodg'd, whether in the *Pope* alone as the *Jesuits* say, or in a *General Council without the Pope*, or in both together; 'tis certain that they must be always in a doubt about the Truth of their Religion. On the contrary we *Protestants* believe, that God has appointed no such visible and infallible Judg of Controversies of Faith in the Church, but has left every one of the Faithful to be his own Interpreter and Judg of what is contain'd in the Holy Scripture, for the Direction of his own Conscience, without granting to any one an Authority of imposing his own private Interpretation upon others, as a Law. And this we prove by the following Arguments. (1). Because God has no where in his Word signified to us, that he had appointed such a Judg in his Church, much less who it was: Tho such a thing would have been very requisite for the removing of all Differences that might arise in Matters

Matters of Faith. (2.) Because God commands the direct contrary, which, if there had been such a Judge appointed, would have been superfluous, and incompatible with it. As for instance, he not only commands us to read the Scripture carefully *, but also to search into and try its Doctrines †. (3.) Because they are commended who search'd the Scriptures, to know whether what the Apostles taught was true or not ||. From all which we infer, that God has left us the Scripture, as a Rule and Direction to our Consciences, but has appointed no visible Judge to preside over them, or to dictate to them.

Notwithstanding this, the *Romanists* offer at several Arguments to maintain their Opinion, the chief of which is taken from the Constitution of the *Jewish* Church: God, say they, did appoint such a Judge in the *Jewish* Church, *Deut.* 17. 8, 9, 10. and therefore he has appointed such an one in the *Christian* Church.

Ans. We deny both the *Antecedent* and the *Consequent*. In opposition to the *Antecedent*, we say, (1.) That God did not, in the Place alledg'd, appoint a Judge to determine Controversies of Faith, but only of Civil and Political Matters; for thus it is there said, *If there arise a Matter too hard for thee in Judgment, between Blood and Blood, between Plea and Plea, between Stroke and Stroke, &c.* (2.) We say further, that the Judge, whom God appointed in this Place, was not *Infallible*, and therefore it makes nothing to their purpose. Now that this Judge in the *Jewish* Nation was not *Infallible*, is evident from hence; First, because *Lev.* 4. 2, 3, &c. a Sacrifice is appointed for the Offering of the Priest who should sin through Ignorance, to be offer'd up for himself and the People, whom he might have caus'd thro the same Ignorance to have sin'd. Secondly, because those Judges were expressly commanded to *have no respect to Persons in Judgment, not to follow a Multitude to do Evil, nor to speak in a Cause, to decline after many, to wrest Judgment.* Thirdly, because they are sharply reprov'd, for having departed out of the Way, and for having caus'd many to stumble at the Law. From whence 'tis plain that those Judges not only might possibly err, but also were actually, and with aggravating Circumstances, guilty of

* Col. 3
16. 1 Co
14. 20.
† Matt.
15.
1 Thess.
21. 1 Jo
4. 1.
1 Cor. 10
15. He
5. 14.
|| Acts 1
11.

The Popish
Argument
for an In
fallible
Judge con
sider'd.

Exod: 23.
2. Levit.
19. 15.
Mal. 2. 8.

Error and Sin. Fourthly, the same is likewise evident, from that unjust Sentence which they pass'd upon the Prophets, whom they condemn'd, and ston'd to death; but especially from their Injustice, in condemning our Saviour as a Blasphemer, and delivering him as such to Pilate to be crucified. Lastly, nor was this pretended *Infallibility* lodg'd in the *Jewish Sanhedrim* or Council, since it was compos'd of the various Sects of *Pharisees*, *Sadduces*, and *Essenes*, who were so far from being all of a Mind, that they disagreed in one very weighty Point, viz. the Resurrection of the Dead, which the *Sadduces* utterly deny'd.

From all this 'tis evident, that there was no Judg appointed in the *Jewish* State, to determine definitively in Matters of Faith; and that the Judg who was appointed to decide in Civil Affairs, was not *Infallible*.

But tho we should grant that God hath appointed such a Judg in the *Jewish*, yet it cannot with any colour of Reason be infer'd, that he has set up such a visible and supreme Judg in the *Christian* Church, unless he had pointed out to us in Scripture Who he was, which we no where find him to have done. The *Romanists* do indeed tell us, "That if there be no such Judg appointed in the *Christian* Church, then *Christ* has not provided so well for the Church, his Spouse, under the New Testament, as God did formerly under the Old." To this we answer, (1.) That since God or *Christ* has not appointed such a Judg in the Church, it is to be infer'd, that he has provided better for the Church without such an one, than if there had been such a Judg set over it. (2.) The State and Condition of the *Christian* is quite different in many respects from that of the *Jewish* Church. The People of *Israel* liv'd altogether in one Country, and not only constituted one Church, but likewise one Body Politick, and therefore stood in need of a visible Judg, who by his Sovereign Authority should determine all civil Controversies, that so the publick Peace might be maintain'd. But the *Christian* Church is dispers'd in several Parts of the World, and does not necessarily, but by accident constitute any Body Politick, as it is a Nation, or Part of a Nation; and therefore does not want any visible Judg.

Again,

Again, the *Romanists* urge, "That if God has not appointed such a visible Judg in the Church, he has not sufficiently provided for the Salvation of the Faithful." To this we answer, (1.) That God has made a sufficient Provision for it, in that he has given us a full and perfect Rule both of Faith and Manners, clearly and perspicuously containing all things necessary to Salvation; from whence every one that tenders his Happiness may extract whatsoever is necessary to be known to his Soul's Health and Salvation.

What they urge from some Texts of Scripture (*viz.* 1 *Tim.* 3. 15. *Revel.* 21. 2. and *Gal.* 4. 26.) to prove that the Pope has the Power of determining all Controversies lodg'd in him, is very trifling and impertinent, and deserves no Answer. For if those Places mean any thing to the purpose, it is to be understood of the whole Body of the Church taken collectively, and not of any one or more Doctors of the *Christian* Church taken singly and separately.

S E C T. V.

Concerning the Rule of Interpreting the Scriptures.

But it may be farther ask'd, "Is there not any visible Determination in the Church, to which, as to a certain Rule and Standard, all the Interpretations of Scripture are to be accommodated, and by which we may and ought to distinguish the genuine Interpretations of Scripture, from those which are spurious and false?" The *Romanists* maintain that there is such a Rule, and that it is the Writings of the Fathers or antient Doctors of the Church, and the Decrees of Councils. But we *Protestants* deny that there is any such Authority lodg'd in either of these.

That the Writings of the Fathers are not the Rule of interpreting Scripture, nor of determining the Controversies which are now on foot among *Christians*, we shall evince by two Arguments. First, because we cannot discover by the Writings of the Fathers, what their Opinions were about the present Disputes between

The Writings of the Fathers no Rule for interpreting the Scripture.

Arg. 1.

tween *Christians*. The Truth of this will appear if we consider, (1.) That there are but very few Writings now extant of those Fathers, who liv'd in the three first Centuries; from whence however we should chiefly expect to be inform'd what was the Sense of the Primitive Church. (2.) That the Writings which are remaining, do not treat of the Points now in dispute, but chiefly maintain the Truth and Divinity of the *Christian* Religion against the *Jews* and *Gentiles*, or else are taken up with refuting some Heresies, which are now grown out of date; and if there be any thing in their Writings, which may be apply'd to our modern Controversies, yet 'tis only touch'd upon slightly and superficially, as they treated of some other Matters, to which they had a more immediate Regard. (3.) That there are several Writings obtruded upon us, which were none of the Fathers. (4.) That the Writings of the Fathers are in many places adulterated and mutilated, so that it requires great Study and Judgment, to discern the Genuine from the Spurious. (5.) That there is as much Dispute about the genuine Meaning of the Fathers, as there is about the genuine Sense of the Scriptures; and hence it comes to pass, that Men of all Parties cite the Fathers, and sometimes the very same Places of one and the same Father, to support their own different Notions. (6.) And lastly, That all of them did not propose their Opinions in Writing, since many of them writ nothing at all. From their Writings therefore which are extant, we can only gather what was the Opinion of some few, not of all of them.

Arg. 2.

Our *second Argument* is this: Tho we were assur'd of the Opinion of the Fathers, with respect to our modern Disputes, yet their Writings cannot be the Rule whereby Controversies in Religion ought to be determin'd: (1.) Because all the Fathers may have been mistaken, and there is hardly one of them but hath been charg'd with some one Error, or other, even by the *Romanists* themselves. (2.) The Fathers themselves, as conscious of their own Frailty and the Infirmary of Human Nature, do deny that any Man ought absolutely to be sway'd by their Opinions and Assertions; of which there is a noted Passage in

St.

St. *Augustin* * to that purpose. (3.) Sometimes the Fathers disagree among themselves, not only in Matters of small consequence, but even in those which the Church of *Rome* it self looks upon to be of moment; such as, concerning the Celebration of *Easter*, the Re-baptizing of those who had been baptiz'd by Hereticks, the Procession of the Holy Ghost, &c. But now that they might be Judges, 'tis requisite they should be unanimous, else we shall be at an Uncertainty on whom to depend in doubtful and obscure Matters. (4.) The *Romanists* themselves make no conscience of rejecting whatever is in the Writings of the Fathers, which bears hard upon their Notions. (5.) And lastly, If the Writings of the Fathers were the Rule, by which all our modern Controversies in Religion, and all the different Interpretations of Scripture were to be try'd; no Man could judg of the present Disputes, but he that has thorowly perus'd all those Writings, and knows the various Opinions of all and every one of the Fathers. Now this is a Work of vast Labour, enough to take up a Man's whole Life, by reason of the Multitude of Books, especially if we take into the Number those that were written by the Fathers of the succeeding Centuries. What then would become of a great many of the Faithful, who either are not able, or have not time to run over those Writings? Why they must rely upon the Judgment and Fidelity of those, who pretend to have read them; and how uncertain and hazardous this is, we leave the World to judg.

Nor can the *Decrees of Councils* be the Rule where-
by to determine Controversies in Religion, upon these
accounts; *First*, because the Acts of Councils are not
handed down to us with that Uncorruptedness, as that
we may by them find out what was the genuine De-
cree thereof: But in many Places they are adulterated,

*Decrees
Councils
Rule to
termine
Controve-
sies in Re-
ligion.*

* *Neque quorumlibet Disputationes, quamvis Catholicorum & laudatorum Hominum, velut Scripturas Canonicas habere debemus, ut nobis non liceat salvâ Honorificentia, quæ illis debetur Hominibus, aliquid in eorum Scriptis improbare atque respuere, si fortè inveniremus quod aliter senserint, quàm Veritas habet, divino Adjutorio vel ab aliis intellecta, vel a nobis. Talis ego sum in Scriptis aliorum; tales volo esse Intellectores meorum. Epist. 3. ad Fortunatianam.*

and several spurious Acts are foisted in. But *secondly*, tho they had been transmitted to us uncorrupted, yet they cannot determine Controversies in Religion, because the Decrees of all Councils are subject to Error. Nor is this true only with respect to particular Councils, as the *Romanists* themselves grant, but with respect to General Councils also. For (1.) there never were (properly speaking) any General Councils held, but only Particular ones, compos'd only of a few Bishops, in comparison of those many Bishops and Pastors that were not present at them. (2.) But tho they had been Universal, yet they would have been as liable to Error, the Difference betwixt them and Particular Councils consisting only in the Number, which can never confer Infallibility on any Assembly; for when the Members are subject to Error, the Body compos'd of those Members cannot by Conjunction be render'd less Fallible. (3.) These Councils always consisted of a Party of Men, who sitting as Judges in their own Cause, confirm'd their own, and censur'd the Opinion of their Adversaries, without any regard had to the Truth.

To this the *Romanists* object; "If a General Council may err, then the whole Church may also fall into Error." *Ans.* The Consequence of this Argument is easily disprov'd, because such a Council does not consist of the whole Church, but of a few Bishops that are deputed and call'd thereto: But these may err, and yet the Faith be kept pure and undefil'd by the Bishops and other Doctors not summon'd to the Council, and even by the Laity themselves. But *secondly*, admitting the whole Church may have err'd in some Doctrine, what Absurdity would arise from thence? Certainly the State of the Church in this World is such, that it may not only err concerning the Faith, but even apostatize wholly from it; which might be prov'd by the sad Instances of several Churches. But of this more in another Place.

From what has been said, 'tis plain that there is no such visible standing Rule in the Church, whereby to determine with a definitive Sentence all the Controversies in Religion: Every one of the Faithful must be his own Judg to discern the genuine Sense of Scripture

ture from what is false. Every one has his everlasting Salvation at stake, every one must give an account for himself to God both of his Belief and Practice, and therefore every one ought to be his own Judg of the true Sense of Scripture. However this Judgment ought to be Discretionary, for the Direction of his own Conscience; not Authoritative, so as to impose his own private Opinion upon others as necessary: according to that of St. Paul, *Who art thou that judgest another* Rom 1. *Man's Servant? To his own Master he standeth or falleth.* And tho there were such a thing as a visible Judg of all Controversies appointed, yet all Controversies must at last be resolv'd into this discretionary Judgment. For the Determination of such a Judg could have no Influence upon us, unless we are persuaded that we are bound to submit to his decisive Sentence.

To what has been said, the *Romanists* object that of 2 Pet. 1. St. Peter, *No Scripture is of any private Interpretation.* explain' *Answ.* In this place the Apostle treats more especially of the Prophecies of the Old Testament, which he says are not *ιδίας επιλύσεως*, and what those Words signify we shall now enquire. Passing by the Interpretation of those, who think the Words ought to be read; *ιδίας επιλύσεως*, as also theirs who render *ἐπίλυσιν* by *Missionem* or *Dimissionem*, as a Metaphor taken from those who run in a Race, and do not start till some Signal be given them, and the Barriers be remov'd; we shall give you such an Explication of them, as we look upon to be most suitable with what goes before and comes after. We may therefore very well render, *ιδίαν ἐπίλυσιν*, as it is in our *English* Versions, *Private Interpretation*, not (as the *Romanists* pretend) in opposition to the Publick Interpretation of the Doctors or Pope, as Judg; as if the Meaning was, that no Interpretation of Scripture could be done by a Private Man: but by *ιδία ἐπίλυσις* we are to understand an Explication that is made out of a Man's own Fancy, in opposition to that Exposition which the Holy Ghost has reveal'd to us in the Scriptures. From hence then it will by no means follow, that the Writings of the New Testament (wherein the Meaning of the Prophecies, before obscure, is now reveal'd, and Christ

describ'd by the Prophets under Types and Figures is now fully made manifest) cannot be understood by a Private Man : for what was before propos'd obscurely, is now fully and clearly reveal'd, so as to be understood by every one, that has any regard to his Salvation. Much less can they infer from hence, that no Explication of the New Testament, even in things necessary to Salvation, can be had, unless by means of a visible Jugg, who has the Power of prescribing and imposing his own Interpretation upon others.

S E C T. VI.

Things requir'd of an Interpreter of the Holy Scripture; and how far Reason conduces to the Interpretation thereof.

Qualifications requir'd in an Interpreter of the Holy Scripture. Altho we say that every Christian has a Right of judging discretionarily for himself, which is the true Sense of Scripture, yet it is not to be suppos'd that he must judg at random, or as best pleases his own Humor. There are some things requir'd for passing a right Judgment on the Sense of Scripture; which Qualifications we may distinguish into Preparatory and Concomitant; either as they refer to what is to be done before, or to what is to be done in reading the Holy Scriptures.

Preparatory Qualifications. The *Preparatory* Qualifications are, (1.) A Knowledge of the Original Tongues, as also an Insight into Profane History; the latter of which is requisite in the Old Testament, especially in the Explication of the Prophecies. (2.) That he be free from all Prejudice and Prepossession, and come to the reading of the Scripture, not as a Master to impose upon it his own Sense and Meaning, but as a Disciple to learn and be inform'd by it. (3.) That he do not rely too confidently on his own Parts and Abilities, but with Humility and Modesty implore the Assistance of the Divine Spirit, which God will not deny to those that ask him. (4.) That he be not of a vain-glorious and self-conceited Mind, so as not to renounce an Opinion he has once entertain'd, for fear he should be charg'd with his

his former Folly; but that he be ready to embrace the Truth whenever, and by whomsoever it be offer'd to him. (5.) That he bring along with him an honest and pious Mind, since to such God is pleas'd to reveal his Secrets *; and this is requir'd by the Apostles †: from whence likewise our Saviour says, that such should know his Word, whether it were of God, or whether he spake of himself, *John* 7. 17. and 8. 47.

The *Concomitant* Qualifications are, (1.) That he carefully enquire into the Intention of the Author, whose Words he is to interpret, and in order to this should take notice what goes before and comes after, that so by considering the whole Context he may comprehend the Author's full Meaning. (2.) That he explain obscure Places by those which are more clear, but never those that are clear, by the more obscure. (3.) That he distinguish between literal and figurative Expressions. (4.) That when he explains a figurative Expression, and would render it literally, he should not apply the whole of what is contain'd in the Figure to the thing denoted by this figurative way of Expression, nor any more of it than what the Subject treated on, and the Design of the Author will bear. (5.) And lastly, that he admit of no Sense or Meaning which is repugnant to the Analogy of Faith, inculcated every where in the Scripture, or which implies a manifest Contradiction.

By these things 'tis apparent, what sort of Key ought to be made use of to open to us the mysterious and obscure Sense of Scripture; viz. the Scripture it self, and right Reason. As for the Scripture, forasmuch as it is every where conformable to it self, and implies no Contradiction; it is therefore so to be explain'd, that no Passage shall contradict another, and the Sense of what is more obscure is to be sought after in such Passages as are more clear and evident.

As to *Right Reason*, the share it has in explaining the Scripture, is as follows. (1.) That it should apply the general Rules of Life, comprehended in the Scripture, to all manner of special Cases whatsoever; which are not expressly set down in Scripture, and it was impossible it should be done, since those special Cases are so infinite.

* *Psal.* 2

14.

† *Jam.*21. 1 *Pet*

2. 1.

The Conco
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infinite. (2.) That it should accurately interpret the obscure and hard Places of Scripture, and allow of no Sense of it, which should be repugnant to Right Reason, or imply a downright Contradiction.

Perhaps it may be objected, that the Christian Religion has its Myſteries, which cannot be discover'd by the Use of Reason alone. *Anſw.* This must be granted; because those Myſteries depend upon the free and arbitrary Will of God, and therefore cannot be penetrated by Reason, but 'tis requisite that they should first be reveal'd by God; yet after God has reveal'd them, they are no longer Myſteries, but lie within the reach of our Reason to apprehend. They are therefore call'd Myſteries, not with respect to the present time, in which they are made manifest, but with respect to the past, when they lay in their Obscurity.

Now that Reason is so far useful in Religion and in the Explication of the Holy Scripture, is evident, (1.) From all the Places of Scripture, whereby we are commanded to make use of our Reason in order thereto *; and from those other Places, wherein they are reprov'd who do not make that Use of their Reason which they ought †. (2.) From the universal Consent and tacit Approbation of all Divines: who all of them endeavour to vindicate the Doctrines of the Religion they profess, from all Contradictions and Absurdities; and tho they confess there are some things in their Doctrines above, yet they will not own there are any contrary to Reason. (3.) Because unless we allow Reason such a Share in the Interpretation of the Scripture, it would be impossible to refute any Error in Divinity; for there is no Man, but what does endeavour to justify his own Notions, how wild soever they be, by some Texts of Scripture or other. So that unless Reason was allow'd to discern the true and genuine from the false and absurd Sense of Scripture, or we were forc'd to acquiesce in the bare Letter, we should be often drawn in to embrace not only Absurdities and Contradictions, but sometimes Blasphemies.

We are sensible that this Doctrine will not please every Body, especially those who object several Texts of

of Scripture against what we have advanc'd. The first Place is Rom. 8. 7. *The carnal Mind is Enmity against God, for it is not subject to the Law of God, neither indeed can be.* To this we answer, that by the *Carnal Mind* we are not to understand that Reason with which God has endow'd Man. For (1.) Reason not only can, but really does subject it self to the Law of God, and in its own Judgment consents to the Law, as being holy, just and good; and by Reason it is that Men become a Law unto themselves, their Thoughts accusing or else excusing them. (2.) No Work of the Flesh, a large Catalogue of which St. Paul gives us, *Gal. 5. 22, 23.* can be call'd the Work of Reason, but is directly repugnant to, and condemn'd by Reason. So that Human Reason, and *φεινικα σαρικα*, or the *Carnal Mind*, are two different things; the one can, but the other cannot be subject to the Law of God.

Another Place which they object is, 1 Cor. 1. 23. *We preach Christ crucify'd, to the Jews a stumbling Block, and unto the Greeks Foolishness.* *Ans.* The Apostle in this Place does not here speak of all the *Jews* and *Greeks*, who made a right Use of their Reason, but only of such among them, who were Men of perverse Minds, who held the Truth in Unrighteousness; to these last Christ crucify'd was a stumbling Block and Foolishness, but to the former a Crucify'd Jesus was so far from being a Scandal to the one, or Foolishness to the other, that he was (as the Apostle says in the next Verse) to them which were call'd, both *Jews and Greeks, Christ, the Power of God, and the Wisdom of God.*

Another Place which they object is, 2 Cor. 10. 5. where the Apostle says of himself and the other Disciples of Jesus Christ, That they did cast down *Imaginations, or Reasonings, and every high thing that exalteth it self against the Knowledge of God, and that they brought into Captivity every Thought to the Obedience of Christ.* *Ans.* St. Paul does not here speak of all manner of Reasoning, but of such empty, vain, and carnal Reasonings, which profane Men make use of in opposition to Christ and his Religion. That he does not condemn all manner of Reasoning is evident from hence; in that he destroy'd and brought into Captivity

ty those vain and unprofitable Reasonings of carnal Men, by solid Reasonings, for he could not oppose them with any other Weapons. Since therefore he himself made use of Reason, it cannot be suppos'd that he condemn'd Reason.

Col. 2. 8. Lastly, they object Col. 2. 8. *Beware lest any Man spoil you through Philosophy and vain Deceit, after the Tradition of Men, after the Rudiments of the World, and not after Christ.* *Ans.* By Philosophy in this place we are not to understand the Science or Knowledg of Logick, Physicks or Ethicks; for God himself endu'd Solomon with a Knowledg of these, and they are very useful for the promoting of a good and peaceable Life: But the Philosophy condemn'd here by St. Paul, are the false Opinions of Philosophers, contrary to the Christian Religion, which were deliver'd before God had reveal'd a perfect Religion to the World. Such for instance were the Opinions of *Aristotle*, concerning the Eternity of the World; of *Epicurus*, who deny'd the Divine Providence; and of others.

How Philosophy is not the Interpreter of the Scriptures; and the Reasons assign'd. But after all it may be ask'd, whether the Scripture is not to be interpreted by Philosophy? To this we reply, That if by Philosophy they mean Human Reason, or that Discursive and Reasoning Faculty implanted in Man, by means of which we may discover what is absurd and contradictory, and what is not; we have already shewn what share that has in interpreting the Scripture. But if by Philosophy, they mean the fixing of some stated Truths and Principles, all which must be first known, before any Place of Scripture can be explain'd by us: If with the Author of the Tract, entitled, *Philosophia Scripturae interpres*, they will not allow Philosophy to be a Medium or Instrument, by the help of which a Man may come to the true Sense of the Scripture; but a Square and Rule by which the Sense of Scripture is to be explain'd: This we reject as notoriously false and absurd, and that upon the following Accounts. (1.) Because every Rule ought to be more certain than that which is brought to be squar'd by it: But Philosophy is not more certain than the Scripture, but much more uncertain; therefore it cannot be the Rule of Scripture. (2.) If Philosophy were the Interpreter of Scripture, even in things necessary to Salva-

tion;

tion; then they only would be capable of interpreting the Scripture, who have penetrated into the Depths of Philosophy. And then what would become of so many Thousands of Men, who have neither the Faculty nor Ability of searching accurately and solidly the Mysteries of Philosophy? They will be at an Uncertainty even in things necessary to Salvation; and tho they have the Scriptures by them, yet their Salvation would be founded on the unstable Sand, as the foremention'd Author is pleas'd to express himself. (3.) The Holy Scriptures would be useless, and it would be to no purpose to have had them pen'd. For if we must be certain of the Truth of every Point of Doctrine, before we read the Scriptures, that so by applying the Words of Scripture to this Truth, as to a Rule, we may know the true Sense of Scripture; it will necessarily follow, that the Sacred Writings were pen'd to no purpose at all, since they cannot inform us in any one Point of Doctrine, but what we fully knew by Philosophy before.

Upon the whole Matter we conclude, that Reason is indeed the Key, whereby the obscure Sense of Scripture is open'd, and the genuine Sense of the Words may be discover'd; but it is not of it self the sole Arbitratrix of those Divine things, on which our Salvation and the Means of attaining it do properly depend; such for instance as Faith in Christ, who was crucify'd, rose from the Dead, ascend'd into Heaven, and sitteth on the right Hand of God; with all the things that depend immediately upon it. For this neither Reason nor Philosophy could of it self have found out, nor taught us as the only Means of attaining eternal Life: But since such a Method of attaining everlasting Salvation depends merely upon the Will of God; it was requisite that Man should come to the knowledg of it by *Divine Revelation*, which is such a Manifestation of the Divine Will, as would otherwise be unsearchable by Mankind.

B O O K II.

O F G O D and his W O R K S.

C H A P. I.

*Of the several NAMES by which God is call'd
in Scripture.*

the Parts
of Religion
consist in
the Know-
ledg and
Worship of
God.

om. 10.
4.

the Nature
and Works
of God ne-
cessary to
be known.

HAVING in the preceding Book treated of the *Foundation* and the *Rule* of our Religion, I shall now proceed to the several Parts of it, which are chiefly these two, *viz.* First the Knowledg; Secondly the Worship of God. These Parts are not coordinate, but subordinate; for the Knowledg of God rests not in Speculation only, which would be a barren spurious Knowledg; but is subordinate to Divine Worship. From hence it follows, that the Worship of God is more necessary than the Knowledg of him. Not that we pretend to maintain that the Knowledg of God is useless or unnecessary, for it is the Foundation of all Divine Worship: *For how,* says the Apostle, *shall they believe in him, of whom they have not heard?* But all we contend for is, that this Knowledg ought always to tend to the Worship of God, as a Line drawn from the Circumference to its proper Center.

Now for the due Apprehension and Knowledg of God, two things are to be enquir'd into, his *Nature* and his *Works*. The former will teach us the transcendent Excellency of God, to whom we are to pay our Worship; and the latter will inform us of the Right that God has of exacting from us his Creatures what

what Worship he pleases, and of the Obligation we lie under of paying him that Worship.

For the right Apprehension of the Nature of God, ^{His Nature} 'tis requisite to know what God is, or what sort of Nature that is which we call *Divine*; and then who this ^{what} God is, or what sort of Being it is, to whom the ^{imperfectly} Divine Nature agrees. It must indeed be acknowledg'd, that the Nature of God cannot be fully comprehended in this World, because of its infinite Majesty, and our imperfect State, wherein we look through a Glass darkly. We ought therefore to be modest and cautious in our Searches, to take the Scripture for the Rule of our Faith, and never to define any thing necessary to be believ'd, but what is contain'd therein. Such a Knowledge of God we think to be necessary, as is laid down in Scripture as the Foundation of the Worship due to him, and without which Knowledge we cannot pay him that Worship. This Knowledge is plain and easy, deliver'd in Scripture in express words, or else to be infer'd from thence by self-evident and unexceptionable Consequences. As for the other subtle, intricate, and metaphysical Notions of the Nature of God, which the Schoolmen advance, we think them not necessary, as having little or no regard to the Practice of Piety, and which a Man may be ignorant of without the hazard of losing his Soul.

But before we treat of the Nature of God, we think ^{The Names} fit to say a Word or two of the Names by which God is ^{by which} call'd in Scripture. The Names which we shall consider ^{God is} are not those of his Attributes, nor such as have a relation ^{call'd in} to his Creatures, since these will fall more properly under ^{Scripture.} another Head, but only those which immediately and directly respect his Nature and Essence. These Names are five in *Hebrew* us'd in the Old Testament, viz. יהוה, אלהים, ארני, אר & שר. And two in *Greek*, us'd in the New Testament, viz. Θεός and Κύριος.

The first and principal Name is יהוה, *Jehovah*, and ^{I. The} contractedly יה, *Jah*, which from the number of its ^{Name Je-} Letters is commonly call'd the *Tetragrammaton*. The ^{hovah.} *Jews* have it in so great a Veneration, that they think it not only ought not, but also cannot be pronounc'd. Antiently indeed they say, that it was and ought to have been pronounc'd by the High Priest at the so-

lemn

lenn Benediction; but unless in such a case, they think it unlawful to utter it, and therefore in the ordinary Benedictions, instead of saying *Jehovah*, they cry, *The Name bless thee*. But notwithstanding this their Superstition, it were easy to shew the contrary from Scripture, and that it was not only lawful to pronounce that Name, but also that God requir'd, whenever he should be nam'd by the *Israelites*, to be call'd by that Name. This is evident from the practice of *Moses* *, *Joshua* †, *Elijah* ‖, *Isaiah* **, *Jeremiah* ††, and *Amos* ‖‖; as also from the common and serious Discourses which the *Israelites* had with one another []; wherein they all make use of the Name *Jehovah*.

The Signifi-
cation of it.

But to wave this matter, and come to the Signification of the word *Jehováh*. Because it is deriv'd from the Verb *Hajah*, 'tis the common Opinion, both of *Jews* and *Christians*, that it denotes the *Essence* of God, as if it signify'd him who is necessarily existing, and who gave Existence to all other Creatures. But if we more closely consider the Words of God, *Exod. 6. 2, 3. I am the Lord who appear'd unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob, by the Name of God Almighty; but by my Name Jehovah was I not known unto them*; the former Explication will not hold good: For how does God say, that he was known to *Abraham* only by his Name *Almighty*, and not according to his *Essence* by which he existed of himself from all Eternity, since the *Essence* of God must be first known, before we can arrive to any knowledg of his Attributes? They therefore in my opinion are rather in the right, who think that this Name in its genuine Signification denotes the Constancy of God in performing his Promises; *I am what I am*, being as much as if he had said, I will now really shew my self to be what I promis'd I would be, and I will now perform the Promises which I made to *Abraham*, to his Posterity.

This Name of God teaches us, (1.) What God is in

* Deut. 4. 7. & 6. 4, 35. † Josh. 24. 14. ‖ 1 Kings 18. 21, 37. ** Is. 42. 8. †† Jerem. 31. 34, 35. ‖‖ Amos 4. 12, 27. [] 1 Sam. 17. 45, 46. Ibid. chap. 25: in David's Discourse with Abigail.

himself, viz. an Eternal Being of himself. (2.) How he is unto others, because that from him all other Creatures have receiv'd their Being. And (3.) That we may confidently believe his Promises. What Name teaches

The second Name by which God is call'd in Scripture is in the Plural Number 2. The Name אֱלֹהִים, *Elohim*, and sometimes it is to be found in the Singular אֱלֹה, *Eloah*. It is rather an Appellative than a proper Name, and signifies a mighty Judg. We find it all along in Scripture attributed to God, yet not so peculiarly, but that it is sometimes apply'd to Angels, and sometimes to Men; whereupon God by way of Distinction and Eminence is stil'd, the *God of Gods*, and the *Lord of Lords*. Some there are who think that by the word *Elohim's* being us'd in the Plural Number, we may infer the Trinity of Persons in one and the same Divine Essence: But since 'tis a common way of speaking, especially with Princes, to say *We*, and not *I*, command so and so, wherein the Plural is us'd for the Singular; and since we have greater Testimonies to prove the Trinity in Unity than this amounts to, we do not think fit to insist upon it.

The third Name is אֲדֹנָי, *Adonai*, which is likewise of the Plural Number, with a Pronoun of the first Person prefix'd to it; it signifies my Lord, and by the Septuagint is commonly render'd *Κύριος*, and sometimes *Δεσπότης*. This Name is by way of eminence attributed to God, as being the Supreme Lord, but is likewise common to the Creatures. 3. The Name Adonai.

The fourth Name is אֱל, *El*, which is likewise an Appellative, and signifies, the strong God. From this Word many other Names are deriv'd, as *Israel*, *Michael*, *Daniel*, &c. It is likewise apply'd to Angels and Men. 4. The Name El.

The fifth Hebrew Name is שַׁדַּי, *Shaddai*, or אֱל שַׁדַּי, *El Shaddai*. This Name is wholly attributed to God, and never in Scripture to any Creature; it signifies, according to some Interpreters, *self-sufficient*, but according to others, *Omnipotent*. 5. Shaddai.

Thus have we given you an account of the Hebrew Names by which God is call'd in the Old Testament. As to the Greek Names, they are only the Versions of the Hebrew ones, and need no Exposition. We shall

therefore go on to consider more distinctly the Nature of God.

C H A P. II.

Of the Attributes of God in General.

*e Divine
tributes.* **T**HE Divine Nature, as far as it can be comprehended by us in this World, wherein we cannot behold him but in a Glass darkly, is to be learnt by the Attributes which are ascrib'd to him every where in Holy Writ. They are not common nor proper Accidents, which are really distinct from the Divine Essence; but are one and the same thing with the Divine Essence, which denote to us the manifold Perfection thereof, according to our Capacity of apprehending it. The distinction therefore which arises between the Essence and the Attributes of God, does not proceed from God, but from our imperfect Reason, and finite way of conceiving things, which however are not feign'd at pleasure, but founded in the nature of the thing it self.

But tho our Mind conceives that which in its own Nature is one and simple, as many distinct Attributes, yet it does not err in this its Conception, but only apprehends imperfectly: For it does not conceive them as really distinct, but upon its own account, exerting themselves by distinct Operations, tho they are really but one Essence.

*no things
be ob-
serv'd in
considering
em.* In the Contemplation of the Divine Attributes two things are to be regarded: First, because the Distinction of the Divine Attributes, according to our manner of conceiving them, has its Foundation in the very Nature of the Thing, we ought not to confound them, or the Effects of various Attributes with one another; but to explain each Attribute with distinct Definitions, and so distinguish the Effect of one from the Effect of the other. Secondly, the Effects of the Attributes are not to be confounded with the Attributes themselves, *viz.* Beneficence with Goodness, Punishment with

with Justice, Pardon with Mercy, &c. For the Attributes are necessary, but the Effects are free and voluntary, and may be absent without any Prejudice done to the Attributes.

The Divine Attributes are variously distributed by *The Div* Divines, but we think the most natural Division is that, *sion of* whereby they are distinguish'd into two Sorts; viz. *them.* First, such as are attributed to God consider'd simply as a Being, of which nature are his *Unity, Spirituality, Eternity, and Immensity*, which are call'd the *Incommunicable Attributes* of God. And secondly, such as are attributed to him as he is a Living Being, and which are communicable to the Creatures, of which kind are *Life*, and the principal Faculties thereof, viz. *Intellect or Understanding, and Will*. In the *Will* there are two sorts of Attributes, some consider'd as Passions, as *Love, Hatred, Anger, Desire, Aversion, Hope, Fear, Despair, Joy, Sorrow, and Repentance*. Others are consider'd as moral Vertues, restraining those Passions, as *Justice, Clemency, Longanimity, Severity*, to which are added, the *Power, Blessedness, and Glory* of God. Of all these we shall discourse distinctly in the two next Chapters.

C H A P. III.

Of the Incommunicable Attributes of God.

THE first sort of Attributes are such as more peculiarly belong to God, consider'd simply as a Being, which are so far peculiar to his Essence, as to be Incommunicable to any other Being whatsoever; no Creature being capable of sharing in the *Unity, Spirituality, Eternity, and Immensity* of God. But of these Attributes we think fit to treat in as many particular Sections.

S E C T. I.

Of the UNITY of God.

e Unity The first *Incommunicable* Attribute to be treated of, *God.* is the essential *Unity* of the Divine Nature : by which we mean, not a *Generical* or *Specific*al *Unity* comprehending several *Species* or *Individuals* under one and the same *Genus* or *Species*, but a *Numerical Unity*, whereby God is undivided in his own Nature, divided from all other Beings, incapable of being multiply'd, as being ONE, and no more. That this Perfection doth belong to the Notion of God, may be made evident both by Scripture and by Reason.

prov'd by In the first place, the *Scripture* does loudly proclaim *Scripture,* the *Unity* of the Divine Nature. Thus *Deut.* 6. 4. cited by our Saviour *Mar.* 12. 29. *Hear O Israel, the Lord our God is one Lord:* And Chap. 4. 35. it is said, *That there is none else besides him.* And Chap. 32. 39. *See now that I, even I am he, and there is no God with me.* *John* 17. 3. *This is Life Eternal, that they might know thee the only true God.* To the same purpose you may consult the following Passages, *1 Cor.* 8. 4, 5, 6. *Gal.* 3. 20. *Eph.* 4. 6. *1 Tim.* 2. 5.

And by Nor is this less evident by *Reason*, as may be evinc'd *Reason.* by the following Arguments. (1.) Because God is a necessary and self-existing Being ; for the very Notion of God implies his necessary Existence. But this cannot be common to more than One : For if there were more Gods than one suppos'd, nothing will be found in each of them singly why they should necessarily exist, nor why we should think there are two any more than ten or a hundred. (2.) In different Individuals there are some singular Properties, by which they differ from one another ; but this cannot be said of God, who is a necessary, and therefore a most perfect Nature. (3.) If there were more Gods than one, they might each of them singly will not only things different, but also things contrary to one another ; for 'tis necessary that every one of them should be endu'd with a Freedom of Will, else they would be no Gods. And then

then what would be the Consequence of this? Why these *Many* Gods willing different and contrary things, would disturb the Course of Nature, and put the whole Frame into Disorder and Confusion. (4.) If we should suppose more Gods than one, all Religion would fall to the ground. For no Reason could be assign'd why we should obey one any more than another, and to obey all of them together would be impossible.

The mad Notion then of the *Manichees*, who sup-
pos'd two active Principles, the one good, and the o-
ther bad, the one the Fountain of all the Good, the o-
ther the Cause of all the Evil that befalls us, is suffici-
ently refuted by what has been said on this Head. For
from these two opposite Principles, neither of which is
subject to each other, nothing can be expected but a
continual Confusion and Disorder, and an Uproar in the
whole Frame of Nature: Besides, 'tis contrary to com-
mon Sense and right Reason, that there is a God, and
that this God is Evil; since the Notion of God excludes
from it all manner of Wickedness.

But a farther Use we ought to make of this Doctrine
of the *Unity* of God amounts to this: First, because
there is but one God, we should rely wholly upon him
alone, casting away all our Confidence upon those that
are falsely call'd or believ'd to be Gods, according to
the Advice of our Saviour*, and St. Paul†. Secondly,
that we should love him with all our Hearts, with all
our Minds, and with all our Strength, as 'tis comman-
ded *Mat. 22. 37.* which we could never do, if there
were any more than one God.

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chees No-
tion of a
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* *Mat.*
10.
† *1 Cor.*
8. 5, 6.

S E C T. II.

Of the SPIRITUALITY of God.

The next *Incommunicable* Attribute to be spoken to, *The Spirituality* of the Divine Nature; by which we understand that God is a Spirit, that is, a most pure, immaterial Essence, without Figure or Parts, not capable of Rarefaction or Condensation, not visible to our bodily Eyes, and therefore not to be represented by any kind of sensible Image; and whose proper and

essential Act it is to *think*. We must then in our apprehending the *Spirituality* of God, remove all Corporeity and Figure in our Conceptions of him, and look upon him as an Immaterial, Incorporeal, and Powerful Intelligent Being.

Arguments That this Attribute belongs to the Divine Nature, *prove God* may be demonstrated, not only from express Words of *Spirit.* Scripture, which admit of no dispute, but also by solid Arguments taken from Scripture and the Nature of the thing it self. For (1.) There are such Beings as Spirits

eb. 1. 14. created by God : The Angels and the Souls of Men are *col. 1 2 . 7.* expressly stil'd *Spirits*, and therefore God is a Spirit : For since a Spirit is a much more noble and excellent Being than Body ; if God were Body, he could not have produc'd a Spirit, as being much more noble than himself. (2.) Unless God were a Spirit and Immaterial, he would be a natural and necessary Agent ; nay he would not be so much as God : For all Matter in its own nature is heavy and unactive, and subject to certain Laws, such as is not capable of Motion, unless impel'd by something else, and moves necessarily in proportion to that Impulse, and rests not, unless it be stop'd by some other Body, with the like ; none of which can be said of God, without destroying that Notion which all Mankind have of that Excellent and Independent Being.

The Error From hence then is evident what a monstrous Doc- *f the An-* trine was taught by the *Anthropomorphites*, who were *thropo-* not afraid nor asham'd to ascribe the Members of a *morphites* Human Body to God : For tho the Scriptures often *refuted.* speak of God, as having Eyes, Ears, Hands, &c. yet this is by way of accommodation to our finite Capacities, and in condescension to the Weakness and Infirmary of our Natures, which cannot comprehend the Actions of a Spirit, unless under the same Notion we have of our Soul's acting in and by the Members of the Body. Nor is it to any purpose what they object, that Man being made in the Similitude and Likeness of God, it follows that he should be of a Form like to the Human ; for this Similitude was not External in the Bodily Shape, but Internal, and seated in the Mind.

That God Because God is a *Spirit*, it follows that he is also *is invisible.* *Invisible*, for a Spirit is not only without Corporeal Extension and Figure, and other Properties of a Body, but

but is likewise void of Colour, which is properly the Object of Sight. Hence the Scripture says expressly of God, *That he cannot be seen*. Thus when *Moses* desir'd of God that he might see his Face, 'tis answer'd, *Thou canst not see my Face; for there shall no Man see me, and live* *. By St. Paul he is stil'd *ἀόρατος*, the Invisible God †, whom no Man hath seen, nor can see ||.

To this it may be objected, that we often read in Scripture of God's being seen by, and appearing to several of the Patriarchs, Prophets and others of old; as for instance, to *Isaac* *, to *Jacob* †, to *Moses* and *Aaron*, and his Sons *Nadab* and *Abihu* ||, to *Gideon* **, to the Parents of *Sampson* ††, to *Micaiah* |||, and to *Isaiah* [].

Ans. In all these Instances it is not said, that God himself was truly seen by any of these Persons; but we are to understand that he manifested himself to them, either by the Divine *Shechinah*, that glorious Appearance which he made in some radiant and bright Cloud, or else by an Angel discoursing with them in the Name of God, or lastly by some Dream or Vision of the Night. The former of these Appearances of God's Glory was made frequently to the Patriarchs, and particularly to the *Israelites* upon Mount *Sinai*, when the Law was given to them, as also several other times in the Wilderness, when the Divine *Shechinah* or Glory overshadow'd the Tabernacle; but tho they heard a Voice speaking to them, yet they did not see any Similitude or Figure of him who spake. The second way whereby God manifested himself, was by an Angel that represented him; and thus he appear'd to *Jacob*, sometimes to *Moses*, to *Gideon*, and to the Parents of *Sampson*, of whom it is said expressly, that the Angel of the Lord, or the Angel of his Presence appear'd to them. To *Isaac*, *Micaiah* and *Isaiah* God manifested himself in the last manner, viz. by a Dream or Vision of the Night; and thus he appear'd, not only to the Prophets under the Old, but to several

* Gen. 26. 2.

† Gen. 32. 30.

|| Exod. 24. 9, 10, 11.

** Judg. 6. 22.

†† Judg. 13. 22.

||| 1 Kings 22. 19.

[] Isa. 6. 1.

Persons under the New Testament, who are said to be *Divinitus admoniti*, admonish'd by God in a Dream.

As to what is farther objected, that the Saints in the other World shall see God*, that they shall behold him face to face†, and even as he is||: To this we answer, That to see God in those places does not signify the Vision or beholding of the Divine Essence, since if that could be seen, it must be of some determinate Figure and Colour, which is the proper Object of Sight. But by the *Beatifick Vision* we are to understand a familiar Presence and constant Conversation with God, such as the Angels enjoy, attended with a full and perpetual Fruition of all the good things which shall flow from the Divine Wisdom, Power and Goodness. So that to see God denotes the enjoyment of him and all Divine Good.

And here we may take occasion to say something of the Simplicity of God, as having a necessary affinity to his Spirituality. By the *absolute Simplicity* of God we mean his Freedom from all kind of Composition or Mixture; either of Principles or of Parts: For he is not only *One*, but as he is a *Spirit*, he is exempt from all manner of Composition whatever. Reason it self teaches us, that God cannot be compounded of any Principles, because the Principles and Ingredients which concur to the making of any thing, must be antecedent to that thing. And if the Divine Nature were compounded, it would follow that there must be something in Nature before him, which is inconsistent with his being the first Cause.

We have insisted the longer on this Attribute of the Spirituality of God; because there are, and have been some Men, who with an air of Confidence have asserted, that the Notion of a *Spirit*, or *Immaterial Substance* doth imply a Contradiction, and that there is an utter Impossibility of any other Being besides Matter. But tho' this hath been said, yet (as Bishop Wilkins in his *Natural Religion* observes*) it was never prov'd, nor can it be, till either a Man be able to evince that the Notion of Substance, according to the most general use of it, doth necessarily imply Corporeity, than which nothing

* B. I. Chap. 8. pag. 105.

can be more false; or unless a Man shall pretend to the certain Knowledg and Comprehension of all things that are or may be, than which nothing can be more vain.

The Use we ought to make of the Doctrine concern-^{The U}ing the Spirituality of God, may be reduc'd to these ^{this D} Heads: (1.) Because God is a Spirit, he may exact ^{trine.} from us a spiritual Worship, which we are oblig'd to pay him, according to that of our Saviour, *Joh. 4. 24.* (2.) We likewise may confidently expect to receive from him those spiritual Benefits he hath promis'd. (3.) That we do not make to our selves any Representation of God, under whatsoever Image, since a Spirit cannot be represented by any Image, 'tis only Body that can. Wherefore God has severely forbidden it*, and * *Deu* the *Romanists* are extremely to blame in tolerating such ^{15, 16,} Images to be made and stand in their Churches, tending ^{Isa. 40.} so much to Idolatry, and in opposition to an express ^{Acts 17} Law of God to the contrary.

S E C T: III.

Of the ETERNITY of God.

The third *Incommunicable Attribute* of the Divine ^{The E} Nature, of which we are to treat, is the *Eternity* of ^{nity of} God. Now without enquiring nicely into the nature ^{consider} of *Eternity*, or defining whether it be a *fix'd* or *successive Duration*, since there are difficulties on both sides, 'tis enough to observe, That by the Eternity of God we mean his being of infinite Duration, without Beginning or End, his being always the same, without any Alteration or Change of his Nature. That this Attribute belongs to God, may be evinc'd from *Scripture*, and from *Reason*.

In the first place, the Scripture in express terms calls *Prov'd* him *Eternal**, the *King Eternal*, *Immortal*†, who only from *St* hath *Immortality*||, the *everlasting God*, who *fainteth not*, *neither is weary***^{ture.}. The Psalmist says concerning him, *Thou art the same, and thy Years shall have no end*††. And by *St. John* he is describ'd by this Paraphrase, *ὁ ὢν, ὁ ἦν, ὁ ἐρχόμενος*Θ, who is, who was, and is to come|||.

* Rom. 16. 26. † 1 Tim. 1. 17. || 1 Tim. 6. 16. ** Isa. 40. 28. †† Psal. 102. 27. ||| Rev. 1. 4, 8. ch. 4. 8. ch. 11. 17.

From all which Places 'tis plain that God is that Being, who knew no beginning of Days, and will know no End of Life.

Nor is this less evident from *Reason*, because if God were not Eternal *à parte anteriore*, as the Schools speak, that is, if he had not been from everlasting, or from all Eternity, then he must have deriv'd his Being from some other Cause, and so could not have been supreme, but he to whom he ow'd his Original ought to be esteem'd such : For it cannot be said that God deriv'd his Being from nothing, since if at any time there was nothing, it necessarily follows there should be still nothing existent in the World ; because, unless there had been some Being existing from all Eternity, it is impossible that any other Being could have existed. But since 'tis manifest that there are Beings in the World, it necessarily follows that there was a Being from Eternity, and from whence all the others were deriv'd ; and this Being, as we have already evinc'd *, is God. Again, if God were Eternal *à parte anteriore*, i. e. from all Eternity, then he must be so *à parte posteriore*, that is, to all Eternity ; since being self-existent, and owing his Being to no other Cause, he cannot receive his End either from himself, or from any other Cause, and therefore must be God, as from everlasting, so to everlasting, as the Psalmist speaks, *Psal.* 90. 2.

From God's being prov'd to be *Eternal* we may likewise infer, that he is an *Independent* Being, both in his Nature, and in his manner of Acting ; as also that he is *Immutable*, being free from all kind of Change or Inconstancy, either in his Substance, Attributes or Purposes.

Now by what has been said on this Attribute, we may learn, that because God is *Eternal*, we may with a sure confidence expect to receive from him the Reward of everlasting Life ; since as such he is able to bestow that Reward upon those who worship him. But unless he was Eternal, he could not have done it, nor could they who worship him have expected with the least assurance any such thing at his hand.

S E C T. IV.

Of the IMMENSITY of God.

The last *Incommunicable* Attribute which we mention'd, is the *Immensity* or *Omnipresence* of God; of which we can say but little else, besides what the Psalmist says, Psal. 145. 3. *Great is the Lord, and his Greatness is unsearchable.* For how can a *Finite* comprehend the Nature of an *Infinite* Being? Various are the Opinions of Divines concerning the *Immensity* of God; some understand it of the *Essence*, others only of the *Power*, and *Providence*, and *Knowledge* of God. But since there are Difficulties on all sides, we shall not undertake to determine precisely which of them is in the right. We leave them to their own Liberty of thinking, and only desire they would not impose their Sentiments as necessary to be believ'd by others, but grant them the Liberty of speaking in the Scripture Words and Phrases, in explaining the manner of the *Divine Omnipresence*.

'Tis enough then for our purpose to know that God is so far *Immense*, as to be included and circumscrib'd by no Place, and to be excluded out of none; but that he is present every where after an ineffable and unsearchable manner, so that nothing can be conceiv'd, where God is not.

In this Sense the Scriptures speak of the *Immensity* or *Omnipresence* of God. Thus God says himself, *The Heaven is my Throne, and the Earth is my Footstool* *; * Isa. And again, *Do not I fill Heaven and Earth?* saith the Lord †. So Solomon speaking of God says, *The Heaven, and the Heaven of Heavens cannot contain thee* ||. || 1 R. Again, Zophar the Naamathite cries out to Job, *Canst thou by searching find out God? Canst thou find out the Almighty to Perfection? It is high as Heaven, what canst thou do? deeper than Hell, what canst thou know? The Measure thereof is longer than the Earth, and broader than the Sea* *. But above all, the Royal Psalmist very elegantly expresseth himself to this purpose, *Whither shall I go from thy Spirit? Or whither shall*

shall I flee from thy Presence? If I ascend up into Heaven, thou art there: If I make my Bed in Hell, behold
 al. 139. *thou art there* *, &c. This is the Account which the
 2, &c. Scriptures give us of the *Immensity* of God, in which
 we ought to acquiesce, without amusing our selves with
 any intricate and metaphysical Speculations about it.

Use of The Use then we are to make of this Doctrine, may
 Doc- be reduc'd to the following Particulars; viz. (1.) That
 we every where walk circumspectly and reverently, as
 if in the Presence of God. For the *Omnipresence* of
 God is the Foundation of that Worship we pay him,
 without which he could not require Divine Worship to
 be paid him by all Men and in all Places, nor would
 Men be very solicitous of doing him that Homage.
 (2.) That we offer up our humblest Petitions with a
 full Assurance of being heard by him, of which we
 could by no means be certain, if he were not Omnipre-
 sent. (3.) That all our Thoughts, Words and Actions
 be grave and serious, and that our Reverence for the
 Presence of God be as great, as we generally have for
 wise and grave Men. From whence God says to *Abra-*
ham, Gen. 17. 1. *I am God Almighty, walk before me,*
and be thou perfect.

C H A P. IV.

Of the Communicable Attributes of God.

HAVING thus discours'd at large of the *Incommunica-*
ble Attributes of the Divine Nature, which are as-
 crib'd to God consider'd simply as a Being; we shall
 in this Chapter treat of those Attributes which belong
 to him as a *Living Being*, and which, tho they are in
 God after an infinite and perfect manner, yet are com-
 municated in some lower and imperfect degree to other
 Inferior Beings. Of these Attributes we shall speak
 according to the former Distribution of them, in sever-
 al distinct Sections.

S E C T. I.

God consider'd as a Living Being.

Before we descend to Particulars, 'tis necessary we should premise something in general concerning the *Life* which is attributed to God, this being the Foundation of all the other Divine Attributes and Operations, without which there would be no God, much less would he deserve to be worship'd. Hence it is, that the Scripture ascribing Life to God, does not only say that God lives, but likewise takes in some other of his Attributes, suitable to the Subject it treats of, when it attributes Life to God. Thus for instance, in opposing God to Idols, and proving him to be the true God, the Scripture distinguishes him from them, by calling him the *Living God* *. Again, when it opposes him to the Riches of this World, it calls him the *Living God*, i. e. able to do all things, being stedfast and immovable; in opposition to Riches, which are of a perishing, fleeting and uncertain nature †. Lastly, when he is describ'd as one that will punish Sinners, he is stil'd the *Living God*, that is, one who has Power to punish, and therefore ought to be dreaded and fear'd by Sinners: according to that of the Apostle, *It is a fearful thing to fall into the Hands of the Living God* ||.

But by *Life* properly speaking, when attributed in Scripture to God, we are to understand that internal and constant Act and Energy, whereby the Divine Nature actuates it self internally, and is most perfectly happy; as depending upon no other Cause to which it ow'd its Beginning, and having no Seeds of Corruption within it self which might destroy it. Therefore the Life of God is to be look'd upon as the most noble of Lives, a Life that is most Simple, Perfect and Eternal. Nor is God only a Living Being, but the Author and Source of the Life of all other Beings, as abundantly appears

* Acts 14. 14. 1 Theff. 1. 9. Jerem. 10. 10, 14. Psal. 115. 4, 5, 6, 7. † 1 Tim. 6. 17. || Heb. 10. 31.

im. 6. from several Places of Scripture, wherein he is stil'd the *Quickner of all things* *, the *Giver of Life and Breath* †; to all, in whom we live, move, and have our Being †; and with him is said to be the *Fountain of Life* ||.

That such a Life, even in the highest degree of Perfection, is to be attributed to God, not only the fore-mention'd Places of Scripture testify, but *Reason* it self evinces to us. For because God is a most perfect Being, and the Supreme Governor of the World; it follows that he should be of such a Nature as is capable of this universal Government, and which consists in being endu'd with an *Intellectual Life*. And this is so necessary to be believ'd, that if any would form to himself a God depriv'd of Life, it would be no more than an Idol, and unworthy of all manner of Worship and Obedience.

From what has been said of the transcendent Perfection of the Divine Life, it follows, that it never can have an End; because there is no Principle of Destruction either internal or external in the Divine Life. Hence God is said to have Life in himself *, to be Immortal †, to be Incorruptible ||, and to live for ever and ever **.

S E C T. II.

Of the Communicable Attributes of God, relating to the Divine Understanding; viz. Knowledg, and Wisdom.

There are two things considerable in the Life of God, viz. his Understanding by which he barely contemplates all things, and his Will by which he is carry'd out to the things that are apprehended by him. Of the former of these we shall discourse in this Section; and shall treat of the Divine Intellect, either as it contemplates things absolutely in themselves, which is call'd Science or Knowledg; or as it directs the things known to some certain End, which is stil'd Sapience or Wisdom.

* Joh. 5. 26. † 1 Tim. 1. 17. || Rom. 1. 23. ** Rev. 4. 9. & 10. 6.

By the Knowledge of God we mean that Perfection *The Divine Knowledge* or Faculty whereby he understands and considers things absolutely and as they are in their own Natures, their Powers, Properties, Differences, together with all the Circumstances belonging to them. But that we may fully comprehend this Attribute of the Divine Nature, we will consider it with respect to its Object, and then with respect to the Order and Manner of it.

The Object of it is every thing that is knowable, *Its Object* that is, whatsoever hath, has had, or shall have any Being; from whence God is properly stil'd Omniscient. Now the Objects of the Divine Knowledge are in general these two; First God himself, when he contemplates on his own Nature, Perfections and Properties, in which Contemplation he is most perfectly happy: And then Secondly all other things besides himself, such as his own Decrees, and external Actions, all created Beings and their Actions both internal and external, as also all future things, or things to come. That God has a full Knowledge of all these, might be abundantly evinc'd from Scripture; and that he foresees even future Contingencies, is plain from what he has foretold of them, and afterwards came to pass.

Various have been the Opinions of Divines concerning God's Prescience of future Contingencies; that is, of such Events as depend upon a free Cause or Agent, which may determine it self indifferently either one way or other. Some have deny'd that God foresees these Events, since they are not knowable, and therefore cannot be the Object of Divine Knowledge; besides, they imagine that Free-will and the Divine Prescience are utterly inconsistent. Others think, that future Contingencies do indeed depend upon Man's Free-will, which is indifferent to either side; but that God as he foresees them, has determin'd them by his Decree to one side and not to another. But the latter of these Opinions takes away all Contingencies whatsoever, since, by the Decree of God, what was before only in a State of Possibility, is, as they say, translated into a State of Futurition; and what is worse, it makes God the Author of Sin: For since he foresees the Sins as well as the Vertues of Men, it follows according to them, that he by that Prescience determines Men to sin;

fin; than which nothing can be more blasphemous, and derogatory to the Divine Goodness. As for our part, we do believe that God foreknows future Contingencies, and that notwithstanding this Divine Prescience they do remain Contingencies still; which is evident (as we said before) from God's foretelling of them, and from their coming to pass according to that Prediction.

Objections But to pass by all other Objections against God's
ainst Prescience of future Contingencies, we shall only take
d's Pre- notice of two, which we look upon to be the most ma-
terial; the one is taken from Reason, the other from
ence an- Scripture. Each of these Objections we shall set down
er'd. in their full force, and return our Answer to each of
them respectively.

Obj. 1. The first Objection drawn from *Reason*, runs
thus: "If God foresees or foreknows any thing, that
" thing will certainly come to pass, according as he
" foresees or foreknows it; and if it does thus come
" to pass according to that *Prescience*, it is no longer
" *Contingent*, but *Necessary*, being determin'd to be so
" or so by the Fore-knowledg and Decree of God:
" Therefore the Prescience of God does not extend
" to *future Contingencies*, but to things certain and
" necessary."

Ans. To this, besides what has been already urg'd,
we reply: First, That it must be granted that what-
soever God foresees or foreknows, will certainly come
to pass, just as he foresees or foreknows it. But then
secondly, it does not follow that this *Prescience* of God
should so determine future Events as to make them ne-
cessary; for God foresees things future, just as we be-
hold things present; and as our looking upon Fire does
not make it burn or not burn, so God's foreseeing fu-
ture Events does not determine them either one way or
other. God then does foreknow *future Contingencies*,
and notwithstanding this Divine Prescience, yet they
remain *Contingencies* still.

Obj. 2. Another, and that the strongest Objection, is
taken from *Scripture*, and is as follows: "If God cer-
tainly and infallibly foreknows things future, how
Gen. 6. " can God be said to grieve at the Wickedness of Men,
1 Sam. " and to repent *? How can it be said, that he knew
5. 11. " at

“ at last that *Abraham* feared God, after he had been
 “ tried *? That God expected Grapes from Men, * Gen. 2
 “ whilst they brought forth wild Grapes†? That he 12.
 “ swore by himself to bring the People into the pro- † Isa. 5.
 “ mis’d Land, into which by reason of their Unbelief
 “ he did not bring them||? Lastly, How could God || Numb.
 “ admonish, exhort, intreat and beseech Men to re- 14. 22.
 “ pent, who he knew would never repent?

Ans. For the Solution of this Difficulty many *Ans.*
 things have been offer’d by others: But since the An-
 swer they have given is not sufficient to take off the
 Weight of the Objection, we shall pass it by; and
 give another which we look upon to be more solid,
 and it is this: That God did not only foreknow what
Man, but also what *He himself* would do, which being
 foreknown, Man would do this or that. Therefore by
 virtue of the Divine Prescience it is necessary, that
 God should first of all try Man, and seriously exhort
 and admonish him, &c. before he foreknows that Man
 will or will not obey those Divine Acts. And this An-
 swer ought to be reckon’d so much the more satisfacto-
 ry, because in Scripture God all along is said to invite
 and exhort even those Men to Repentance, of whom he
 foretold that they would not be obedient, that is,
 whom (according to the Expression of those Writers)
 he had harden’d or decreed to harden. And if God
 might seriously exhort and invite those to Repentance,
 whom he had already harden’d, and from whom he
 had taken away the Power of repenting, with much
 greater Reason may he be said to invite and exhort
 those, who he foreknows would not obey, tho it were
 in their Power to do so, and who became disobedient
 by their own Fault.

But after all, we do not establish the *Divine Presci-*
ence of *future Contingencies* as an Article of Faith ne-
 cessary to Salvation; nor do we damn those who deny
 such a Prescience. For the due Worship of God, ’tis
 enough that we know and believe that God knows all
 things which depend upon his Decree, that is, what-
 ever he has decreed to do, whether by his Omnipotency,
 or by his Wisdom: That he knows all our Works both
 past and present, both secret and manifest, even our
 Thoughts, and will bring them all to Judgment.

the Order
of God's
knowledg.

As to the *Order* of the *Divine Knowledg*, for the due understanding thereof it must be known, that Divines commonly ascribe a twofold Knowledg to God; viz. First, a *Knowledg of the simple or pure Intellect*, which in its own Nature is *prior* to all acts of Free-will, by which God knows himself and all possible things. Secondly, a *Knowledg of Vision*; which is likewise free, but *posterior* to the Act of Free-will: By which God knows all those things which he has decreed to do or permit to be done, just in the same order as he has decreed them. To these, some Divines add a third sort of Knowledg, which they call *Scientia media*, or the *middle Knowledg*, because it is between the Knowledg of the pure Intellect and that of Vision, and partakes of both: by this they say God knew conditionally, what Angels or Men would do, if he decreed to place them in such or such a state.

the Man-
ner of it.

As to the *Manner* of the *Divine Knowledg*, it is most perfect; for it is not in God as a Habit, but as an Act in the highest degree of Perfection; and therefore at one view he knows all things by a simple and pure Act of the Intellect, without using any sort of Ratiocination, or deducing the Knowledg of things unknown from those that are known. For this reason, Divines say that the Knowledg of God is *Noetical*, not *Dianoetical*. Beside, this Knowledg is incomprehensible by us finite Beings; for who can comprehend by what way God knows not only the least but also the greatest things, the hidden Thoughts of our Hearts, as well as the outward Acts of our Lives, and all future Contingencies?

the Wis-
dom of God
consider'd.

But enough we presume has been said of the *Knowledg* of God, which is the *Theoretical Act* of the *Divine Intellect*; we shall add one word or two of the *Wisdom* of God, which is the *Practical Act* of the *Divine Understanding*. This is that by which God knows what means to use for the attaining of the End he aims at, and for the Manifestation of his Glory, and what is fit in order thereto to be either done by himself or permitted to be done by others. To be more plain; God knows his Authority, his Power, his Equity, what Laws 'tis fit for him to make, by what Rewards and Punishments 'tis requisite he should establish them, what

what Helps Man stands in need of to obey the Law and attain the promis'd Reward, and what Permission is necessary to be allow'd him, that he may be disobedient, and justly deserve the Punishment denounc'd against him, through his own Fault. Hence is he stil'd in Scripture *, *The only Wise God, the Fountain of all Wisdom,* with the like: And this makes the Apostle cry out, *Rom. 11. 33, 34. O the Depth of the Riches both of the Wisdom and Knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his Judgments, and his Ways past finding out! For who hath known the Mind of the Lord, or who hath been his Counsellor?*

* Rom.
27. 1 T
1. 17.
Dan. 2.
20, 21.

The Use we ought to make of this Doctrine of the Knowledge and Wisdom of God amounts to this: (1.) That we walk sincerely and uprightly before God, as being Omniscient, and that in secret, because he sees in secret. This should make us more afraid of offending God than Man. (2.) That we commend our righteous Cause always to him, having a good Conscience to testify the Sincerity of our Actions, notwithstanding the unjust Censures of Men. Truth and Innocence are often oppress'd here, the best Men calumniated, and there is no avoiding of it: But 'tis to be remember'd that God knows the Uprightness of our Thoughts and Actions, and will in due time, if not in this, yet in the other World, manifest our Sincerity before Men and Angels. (3.) That with Faith and Confidence we pour out our Prayers and Sighs before him, being sure that our very Groans, when we cannot pray, will find admittance in his Ears. (4.) Lastly, That we never murmur against him, nor in any Circumstance whatsoever, provided we duly worship him, despair in our Minds; but wait for the Event of all from his Wisdom, as being that which will be most agreeable to his Glory and our Salvation; since we and ours are always his Care, who is about our Beds and about our Paths, and spieth out all our Ways.

Uses
drawn
from the
Doctrine
the Wisd
and Kno
ledg of
God.

S E C T. III.

Of the Divine WILL.

threefold The other Faculty, or rather internal Act of the Divine Life, is the *Will* of God, which is usually taken in a threefold Sense: As, (1.) to signify the Faculty of Willing, and in this Sense the Will of God is the very Divine Essence by which he immediately wills, just as the rational Soul immediately of its own nature wills and understands. (2.) To denote the Act of Willing or Volition it self, which is a free Efflux of the Faculty; and in this sense it signifies the Divine Decrees, of which we shall treat hereafter in their proper Place. (3.) And lastly, it signifies whatever God wills, or whatever proceeds from the Divine Volition, of which nature are the Precepts, the Promises, and the Threatnings of God. But the treating of the Divine Will taken in this last Sense will fall more properly under another Head, to which we shall refer it; and shall only at present say something of the Will of God in general.

Object To begin then with its Object: This is whatever is truly good, which is both God himself, and every thing else that is agreeable to the Divine Nature; and this God wills for his own sake. As for that which is really and in its own nature evil, this can in no manner of sense be the Object of the Divine Will. Therefore Sin, which is intrinsically and in its own nature evil, as being contrary to the Rule prescrib'd us by God, whether by the Dictates of right Reason, or by some positive and written Law, cannot be said to be will'd by God, much less can any one say that he is delighted therein.

by no means the Object of it. True it is, there is hardly any Man so impudently bold, as directly and in plain words to maintain, that God wills Sin; this would grate the Ears not only of Christians, but also of all the sober Part of the rest of Mankind. Yet some there are who indirectly, and by way of Consequence from their Tenets, do assert as much; who tell us that God wills Sin, not as Sin,

Sin, but as a means of manifesting the Glory of his Mercy in pardoning, and of his Justice in punishing Sin. But not to stand to argue the Impiety and Blasphemy of such a Position, 'tis enough to observe how weak, unreasonable and false it is. For God who is in himself and in his own Nature transcendently and eternally glorious, being (as one elegantly expresses it ^{*}) both Stage and Theatre to himself, has no need of any outward Means to advance his Glory: Much less can it be thought, that among the many other infinite means he has of manifesting his Glory, he should will Sin to that purpose, which is so contrary to his own Divine, and so great a Blemish and Stain to our Human Nature.

The Case is not the same with what is usually stil'd *the Evils of Punishment*, they are only physically such, and are call'd Evils, not because they are intrinsically and in their own nature so, but because they are evil, that is, unpleasant and ungrateful to the Person on whom they are inflicted. If they be Chastisements, they are design'd for the Amendment of him; but if they be such as destroy him, they may illustrate the Glory of God, and therefore God may very well will these. And in this Sense we are to understand those Places of Scripture: *I form the Light, and create Darkness; I make Peace, and create Evil; I the Lord do all these things*†. *Doth not out of the Mouth of the most High proceed Evil and Good*||? *Shall there be any Evil in the City, and the Lord hath not done it* *?

The Inseparable Property of the Divine Will is the Liberty or Freedom of it, which in a most eminent degree belongs to God, upon which account he is said, *Eph. 1. 11. To work all things after the Counsel of his own Will*. Nor is it any Obstacle to this Liberty, that God cannot do any Evil, since his Perfection consists in being able to do nothing but what is good; nor is this the least Diminution of the Freedom of the Divine Will. 'Tis to be remember'd, that all Good is absolutely or supremely so, which is God himself and his Glory; or else such as is dependent upon, and has some respect to the Supreme Good. As to the first of these, the Will of God by a natural Necessity tends to the

willing of it; for God must needs will the supreme Good: And for the latter, the Divine Will is at an absolute Liberty, not only that which they call a Liberty of Contradiction, but even a Liberty of Contrariety. As for instance, God can, among the Variety of good things which are without himself, make choice of one rather than the other, for the Manifestation of his Glory. However this ought not to be understood so as if any thing could be attributed to God under the pretence of the Divine Liberty, which is repugnant to any of his Attributes, either of Holiness, Justice or Mercy, or which might be the least Prejudice to his Glory.

Object-
an-
r'd.

To all this it may be said: If there is in God a Freedom of Will, tho he cannot will any thing but what is Good, why may there not be the same Freedom of Will in Man, altho he be determin'd to what is good by the irresistible Grace of God? To this we answer, that the Case is widely different; for God is subject to no Law, but the very Sanctity of the Divine Nature is a Rule to it self: whereas Men are subject to a Law that is establish'd on Promises and Threatnings. The Nature therefore of a free Obedience requires, that Man should not be necessarily carried out to what is Good, but have the Power either of transgressing or obeying the Law, else his Obedience would be no Obedience.

Divine
either
ret or
veal'd.

The Divine Will is variously distinguish'd by Divines; the first and most common Division is into the Secret, and the Reveal'd Will of God; which some are pleas'd to stile, *Voluntas Signi & Beneplaciti*. These the Calvinists make to be distinct, telling us that the Reveal'd Will of God is not his true Will, but that the Secret Will or Decree of God is so. But to see the Absurdity of this Notion, we need only consider the following Particulars. (1.) If the secret Will of God be his true and only Will, then we who are ignorant thereof, would always be at an Uncertainty what the true Will of God was. (2.) It might so happen that God would not have done that which he commands, but would have done that which he forbids. (3.) They who transgress the Divine Precepts, will not be guilty of any Sin against the true Will of God; even all Sins, how

how enormous soever, will be committed according to it. (4.) And consequently many will be damn'd, because they have done the true Will of God. All these Absurdities will follow upon that Position, that the reveal'd Will of God is not his true Will, but that his secret Will is such. But not to insist any longer upon this Argument, whatever the Secret Will of God may be, 'tis enough that we guide and direct our Actions according to the Reveal'd Will of God, for by it we shall be judg'd at the last Day. Not that we suppose that God has reveal'd whatsoever he has decreed, doubtless there are many things which he keeps secret from us, and that for very wise and good and just Reasons.

Now the manner of God's revealing his Will to us is various. (1.) God reveals it to us by the Execution thereof: For when he does any thing, it is a manifest Sign that he wills it. (2.) He likewise reveals it by his Servants the Prophets and Apostles, as in sundry Times, so in divers Manners. *Various Methods of Divine Revelation*

Another Division of the Will of God, is into that which is Absolute and Conditional. But whereas we intend to treat distinctly of the Divine Decrees in another Chapter, we think this Distinction will be better handled there.

The third Division of the Divine Will, is into that which is Antecedent and Consequent: But this will fall in with the former, therefore we shall not insist upon it.

From what has been said on this Attribute of the Divine Will we may learn, (1.) Because God is of a Free-will and Power, that we receive whatsoever we have as the Free-gift of God, and return our Thanks to him as our liberal Benefactor. (2.) That we always earnestly pray to him for his Grace and Favour, and be very careful of preserving it. (3.) That whatsoever things God does or permits to be done, we take care not to measure according to our Sense of things, since our Ways and God's Ways are not alike. (4.) That we patiently bear whatsoever Afflictions God is pleas'd to allot us for our Portion, and never murmur against him, but with the humblest Resignation of Mind say always, the Will of the Lord be done. *The Use*

(5.) That we heartily obey the Commands of God, by which he has reveal'd his true Will and Pleasure, looking upon it as the true Method of attaining everlasting Salvation.

S E C T. IV.

Of Love, Hatred, and Anger, as attributed to God.

We have already observ'd that there are two sorts of Attributes to be consider'd in the *Divine Will*: First, such as have some Resemblance to the Affections or Passions of Men, and are therefore call'd by the same Names: And secondly the *Moral Vertues*, or *Perfections*, restraining and governing the Passions. Of the first of these we shall treat in this, and the following Section.

Properly speaking there is no such thing as *Passion* in God, for that being an Imperfection, it can have no place in the Divine Nature, which is infinitely perfect. When therefore *Affections* or *Passions* are attributed to God, we must not understand it in a strict sense, but only by way of *Analogy* and Resemblance, to Human Passions. The *Divine Affections* then may be defin'd to be those Acts of the Will of God, which are agreeable to the Operations of Men, who are acted by the like Affections, but yet without the least Disturbance or Perturbation in God. Now that we may accurately explain the *Affections* of God, we must in each of them find out some *Analogy* between the Divine Will and its Actions, and the Actions of Men. But to descend to Particulars.

The first Affection in God is *Love*, which is an Affection of Complacency, whereby he is delighted in that which is good, and unites and communicates himself to it. I reckon this to be the first Affection, because it is an Emanation of the Divine Goodness, from whence all the things that are, and the Perfections of them, deriv'd their Being and Original. The Love of God extends towards all his Creatures, but more especially to Man, the most excellent of his Works

Works in this visible World. This *Philanthropy* of God is loudly proclaim'd to us by Sacred Writ, which tells us that tho he created the Angels of a much more excellent Nature than Men, yet in some respect he may be said to have had a greater Love for the one than the other: For *he took not hold of Angels, but * Heb. took hold of the Seed of Abraham *:* And again, *God 16. spared not the Angels that sinned, but cast them down to Hell, and deliver'd them into Chains of Darknes, to be reserv'd unto Judgment †;* but to sinful Men he extend-^{† 2 Pet}ed his Grace, in sending his own Son to be their Re-^{4.}deemer and Saviour.

This *Love* of God towards Mankind is usually distinguished into two sorts or degrees; viz. *The Love of Benevolence*, and *the Love of Friendship*. *The Love of Benevolence* is that, whereby God loves Men simply as they are his Creatures, without any Consideration whether they deserve that Love or no: And this again is divided into *Grace*, which is an Affection of doing well to those Men who are unworthy of the Love of God, and is always opposed to Merit; and into *Mercy*, which is properly an Affection of succouring the Afflicted, always attended with Tenderness and Compassion. *The Love of Friendship*, is not a single Affection, but with it is join'd a Benevolent Will, whereby God is inclin'd towards a Creature that discharges his Duty; and as such the Foundation thereof is the Love of Justice, by which God does delight in that Good which is so agreeable to his own Nature, and hates all Iniquity. This kind or degree of the Divine Love is more intense than the former, and of it we are to understand those Places of Scripture, where it is said, *He that hath my Commandments and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me; and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest my self to him* |. And again, *Ye are my Friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you*. See likewise to the same purpose, *Acts 10. 34. Rom. 8. 1, &c.* where God is said to love the Good and Righteous.

The Love of Friendship, is not a single Affection, but with it is join'd a Benevolent Will, whereby God is inclin'd towards a Creature that discharges his Duty; and as such the Foundation thereof is the Love of Justice, by which God does delight in that Good which is so agreeable to his own Nature, and hates all Iniquity. This kind or degree of the Divine Love is more intense than the former, and of it we are to understand those Places of Scripture, where it is said, *He that hath my Commandments and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me; and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest my self to him* |. And again, *Ye are my Friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you*. See likewise to the same purpose, *Acts 10. 34. Rom. 8. 1, &c.* where God is said to love the Good and Righteous.

The Opposite to *Love* is *Hatred*, an Affection of Displacency or Dislike, whereby God abhors Evil, and drives it away from him. The Object then of the Divine

Divine Hatred is, (1.) *Sin* in the Abstract, which being repugnant to God's Nature, he cannot but abominate and hate. From hence he is said in Scripture, *to hate Iniquity*'. Again, speaking of the evil Intentions of the Heart and of Perjury, *All these are things that I hate, saith the Lord*'. *These six things* (saith Solomon) *doth the Lord hate, yea seven are an Abomination to him, a proud Look*', &c. So Idols are stil'd *Abominations, which the Lord hateth*'. But (2.) as a Consequence thereof, the Person of a Sinner, consider'd as such, is likewise the Object of God's Hatred; and so 'tis said of him, *Thou hatest all Workers of Iniquity*'; *the Soul of the Lord hateth the Wicked, and him that loveth Violence*'. More especially God is said to hate *Idolaters*', and the *Lovers of this World*, who are stil'd *Enemies of God*'.

Effects The Effect of the Divine Hatred, is a Separation from God, and from a Participation of those good things which flow from the Divine Bounty, of which he might have been a Partaker had he not sinned: Which Separation is more grievous and lasting in proportion to the Greatness of the Sinner's Obstinacy and Impenitency. But the severest Effect of the Divine Hatred, is the Sinner's being excluded from the greatest Good, Eternal Life; and suffering the sorest Punishment, Everlasting Death and Misery,

considered simply as such, the Object of his Hatred But God does not exert his Hatred to all Sinners, but only to the Impenitent; as for the Penitent, he extends his greatest Mercy towards them, and pardons all their Sins. This the Scripture every where informs us of, particularly, *Psal.* 103. 13, 14. 130. 3, 4. *Is.* 1. 16, 17. *Acts* 3. 19. 1 *Joh.* 1. 9. The Object therefore of his Hatred, cannot be Man, as such, without any consideration of his being a Sinner. For Sin alone is the Cause of the Divine Hatred, and Man consider'd simply as a Creature, is (as we have already seen) the Object of the Divine Love. This we thought fit to observe in opposition to those, who tell us that Man consider'd simply as such, tho not in a State of Sin, is

' *Pf.* 45. 8. ' *Zech.* 8. 17. ' *Prov.* 6. 16, 17. ' *Deut.* 12. 31.
 ' *Pf.* 5. 5. ' *Pf.* 11. 5. ' *Lev.* 26. 30. *Hos.* 9. 15. ' *Jam.* 4. 4.
 the

the Object of the Divine Reprobation. It signifies nothing, whether they say, that God had predestinated the Reprobate to eternal Death, or only had pass'd them by in his Election. The Doctrine is the same, whether express'd in softer or harder Terms; for this *Preterition* which they talk of, does necessarily imply *actual Reprobation* and *Damnation*.

To this 'tis very likely they will object, what we read, Rom. 9. 11, &c. *The Children being not yet born, neither having done any Good or Evil, &c.* it is said of them, *Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated.* The Weakness of this Objection will sufficiently appear, as also how falsely those Men apply this Text, if we briefly consider these Particulars: (1.) That this Saying, *Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated,* was not spoken before the Birth of *Jacob* and *Esau*, but a great many Ages after by *Malachi* the last of the Prophets; only this was then foretold of them, *the Elder shall serve the Younger.* (2.) That *Jacob* and *Esau*, in neither of these Passages, signify their proper Persons, but only the Posterity and Nations which should descend from them. (3.) Nor are we to understand *Hatred* in this Place as properly so call'd, whereby God would condemn *Esau* and all his Issue to Eternal Death; for then by Parity of Reason he must be said to have elected *Jacob* and all his Progeny to Eternal Life, which is apparently false, since 'tis evident that a great many of *Jacob's* Descendants were very wicked Men: But 'tis rather a lesser Degree of Love, which in comparison with that which is greater is call'd *Hatred*; and in this Sense the Word *Hatred* is often taken in Scripture, as *Deut.* 21. 15. *Prov.* 13. 24. *Matt.* 6. 24. and especially *Luk.* 14. 26. compar'd with *Matt.* 10. 37.

As a Consequence of the *Hatred* follows the *Anger* or *The Wrath* of God, which is frequently attributed to him in Holy Writ, sometimes to denote his Affection or Desire of punishing¹, and sometimes to express the Punishment it self².

¹ *Exod.* 32. 10. *Joh.* 3. 36. *Rom.* 1. 18. ² *Rom.* 2. 8. & 12. 19. *Luk.* 21. 23.

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t of the
vine
rath.

The Object of the *Divine Anger* is a Sinner consider'd as such, and against none else but Sinners is God said to execute his Wrath. Therefore an innocent Man, or one that is not yet consider'd as a Sinner, or (as some speak) a Man in his pure Naturals, cannot be said to be the Object of the Divine Vengeance. God indeed as an Absolute Sovereign has a Power and Right of destroying the Innocent, and of taking away the Being which he gave them; but he cannot as a Judge punish or pour out his Anger upon them.

Objecti-
answer-

Against this, two Places of Scripture are alledg'd, viz. *Rom. 9. 22.* and *Eph. 2. 3.* where 'tis said, that there are some *Vessels of Wrath fitted to, or made up for Destruction*: And that *we are by Nature the Children of Wrath.*

m. 9. 22.
plain'd.

To this we reply: That *Vessels of Wrath* in the first Passage are not Men plac'd in their pure Naturals, but the incredulous *Jews*, who obstinately rejected that Method of Salvation offer'd to them by God through *Jesus Christ*, and who would attain Righteousness and Eternal Life by another way than that which God had declar'd to be well-pleasing to him. These are said to be *made up for Destruction*; not that God had created them for that purpose, that be far from our Thoughts! but either that they would bring upon themselves the just Wrath of God by their Rebellion, or that God had intended Destruction against such for their Rebellion. For God in the Context is compar'd to a Potter; and as the One out of the same Lump makes one Vessel to Honour and another to Dishonour, so God out of the same Race of Mankind, then in a corrupt and sinful State, and distinguish'd into *Jews* and *Gentiles*, forms Men at his own Will and Pleasure to Salvation and Damnation; that is, designs to bestow Salvation on all, and only on those who believe in *Jesus Christ*, and appoints to Destruction the Unbelievers and Disobedient, and such as would adhere to another Religion besides that which he had set up: and therefore 'tis for their own Rebellion and Obstinacy that Men are fitted to Destruction.

ph. 2. 3.
plain'd.

As to the other Place, 'tis not said *we are*, but only *we were by Nature the Children of Wrath.* And the Word *Nature* does not signify our Natural State, as

if in that we might be the Children of Wrath, but only and truly denotes what the Apostle elsewhere says of Sinners, who had walk'd in the Lusts of Concupiscence, and the Desires of the Flesh, and by reason of this Custom of sinning had been truly the Children of Wrath. For whereas it is *we were*, it has a manifest regard to that State which preceded their Conversion, and therefore shews that they were no longer in that State. By this it appears that neither of these Texts will serve the purpose for which they are urged.

The Effects of the *Divine Wrath* are Punishments *The Effects* both Temporal and Eternal. The Temporal take *of the* place in this Life, and are either Corporeal, a large vine And Catalogue of which we have *Deut. 28. Levit. 26.* or ger. else Spiritual, which are Blindness, and Hardness of Heart, and being given over to a reprobate Sense. The Eternal Punishments consist in being banish'd from the Presence of God, and cast into Hell-fire, prepar'd for the Devil and his Angels.

From all that has been said on these Divine Affections we may learn, (1.) Because God is Good, even *Some practical Inferences.* the Supreme Good, he ought to be lov'd most ardently, as being the Fountain of all Good. (2.) To trust in his Promises without any doubting. (3.) To pour out our Requests before him with full Assurance of Faith. (4.) To conform our selves in all things to his Will, even tho under the Cross, because he directs all things for our Good, will not suffer us to be tempted above our Strength, will either alleviate or shorten our Affliction, and will give his Holy Spirit to them that ask him.

But besides these Instructions, we may likewise learn from the Consideration of the Divine Love, to love God again, and to obey his Commands; and to love our Neighbour: And from that of his Hatred, to be very careful in avoiding all Sin, because if we commit that which he so much abhors, we can have no Communion with him.

S E C T. V.

Of Desire, Hope, and Joy, with their Contraries, as attributed to God.

be Desire
God, From the *Love* of God do arise *Desire* and *Hope*. Desire is properly an Affection to some absent Good, and this Good is the Obedience and Happiness of the Creature. The *Desire* therefore of God is the Affection of obtaining from Man Obedience, or if he has sinned, Repentance, and of bestowing upon him Eternal Life and Happiness. All the Intreaties, Prayers and Obtestations, all the Exhortations and Reproofs to be met with up and down the Scripture are sufficient Testimonies of the Desire God has for the Conversion of Sinners, and their Salvation.

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7. How then can we reconcile with this *Desire* of God the Decree of absolutely reprobating the greatest Part of Mankind, and what is annex'd to that Notion, his denying to them the Grace that is necessary for their Faith and Repentance? For God can in no manner of sense be said to desire the Salvation of those, whom he had absolutely rejected; much less their Faith and Repentance, which he renders impossible by the Denial of his Grace. For who can desire that which by his Action, or the Denial of his Action, he has render'd impossible? It is the same, as if we should require a blind Man to judg of Colours, or a dead Man to walk.

be Avers-
on of
d. To this Desire of God is oppos'd his Aversion, not of the Conversion and Salvation of Sinners, for that he desires as long as he grants them Life; but an Aversion whereby he abhors Sin and Sinners who will not repent; and this he testifies by such Acts as demonstrate his Abhorrence. It differs from Hatred, not in Reality, but in the manner of considering it; therefore
Prov. 28. what has before been said of That, may be applied to
1 am. 3. This. This Aversion God more especially testifies, when he refuses to hear the Prayers of the Wicked *; *Jerem.* when he will not have the Righteous to pray for them †; 16. or when the Righteous do pray for them, he declares
am. 16. 1 that

that he will not hearken to their Mediation'. However this is to be understood only of such Sinners as continue impenitent, and persevere in their Sins: Else, if they seriously return to God, no question but they shall meet with Favour and Acceptance. And this God himself testifies, when he threatens the Wicked with Destruction for their Impenitence, and yet exhorts them to Repentance, and gives them hopes of his Favour, as may be seen, *Amos* 4. 12, 13, 14, 15. *Joel* 2. 12, 13, 14.

Next to Desire follows *Hope*, which adds a Persua-*The Hope of God,*
sion to Desire of probably attaining, tho' with some difficulty, the Good desir'd after and hop'd for; and this Good again is the Obedience or Repentance of Men. However God cannot be said to hope this Good for himself, but expects it from us as his due, and that he may do us good. Thus is he said to have expected that his Vineyard should have brought forth good Grapes'. And again, therefore will the Lord wait, that he may be gracious unto you': and thus St. *Peter* tells us that the Long-suffering of God waited in the Days of *Noah*'.

What therefore is necessary or impossible to be done cannot be the Object of Hope, which considers a thing as hard indeed, but yet possible to be acquir'd. That which necessarily will be, cannot be said to be difficult; and that which is impossible, no body will hope for. No *Hope* then, not so much as that which they stile *Inconsistent with the Decree of Absolute Election and Reprobation.*
per Ἀβσποπάρθεαν, can be attributed to God, when he is said by some to work Good in the Elect by his Almighty Energy, or to deny to the Reprobate Grace sufficient for the working of Good. For what he effects in the Elect by virtue of that Power, is render'd a necessary Event, and therefore God cannot in any sense be said to *hope* for it: Much less can he *hope* for that which he has render'd impossible, by denying the Reprobates sufficient Grace.

But perhaps it may be ask'd, whether the *Hope* of *Consistent with the Divine Prescience.*
God is consistent with the certain Prescience of future Events? To this we answer in the *Affirmative*; for the Prescience of God makes no Alteration in the Nature

' Jer. 15. 1. Ezek. 14. 14, 20. ' Is. 5. 2. ' Is. 30. 18. ' 1 Pet. 3. 20.

of the thing. Therefore tho the Divine Prescience be suppos'd, yet the Object to be hop'd for remains such, as all Circumstances consider'd ought to be look'd upon as probable and likely to come to pass. Nay God by a figurative way of speaking, may rightly be said to hope for that which ought to be answerable in its own nature to his Design, tho by his Omniscience he knew it would not come to pass.

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Object.

There are two things contrary to *Hope*, viz. *Fear* and *Despair*. *Fear* is attributed to God in expresse Terms only once in Scripture, *Deut.* 32. 26, 27. But we no where meet with the word *Despair*; tho there is something analogous to both those Terms to be met with, which may in a figurative way of speaking be applied to God. The Object of this *Divine Fear* is any Evil whatsoever, which God is willing to prevent, whether it be the Evil of Guilt or Sin, or the Evil of Punishment, or what is not evil of it self, tho contrary to the positive Will of God.

Despair as
tributed
God.

The *Despair* of God is nothing else but an abrupt Expectation of the Good desir'd, viz. The Obedience or the Repentance of Man, but which, all things consider'd, 'tis very likely will never come to pass: It arises from the continued Rebellion of Man, who obstinately opposes himself against all the Actings of Divine Grace. Of this we have several Instances in Holy Writ, particularly 2 *Chron.* 36. 14, 15, 16. *Isa.* 5. 4, 5. *Ch.* 65. 2, &c. *Matt.* 23. 37, 38. and *Luk.* 13. 6, &c.

he Joy of
od.

As *Absent Good* raises our *Desire* and *Hope*, so what is *Present* excites our *Joy*. The *Joy* of God therefore is that Affection, whereby he is carried out to the Good that is present and in possession: Which Good is either the Action of Man, whether ceremonial or moral, that is well-pleasing to the Divine Nature; or else the Action of God himself, which he exercises towards Men, whether of *Mercy* towards the Good, or of *Justice* towards the Bad: In both he manifests his Glory, and cannot therefore but be well-pleased and delighted therewith.

rief as
tributed
God.

The oppositite to *Joy* is *Grief* or *Sorrow*, which in God is that Affection whereby he abhors a present Evil. It is expressly but once attributed to him in Scripture, viz. *Gen.* 6. 6. where it is said, That it repented the Lord

Lord that he had made Man on the Earth, and that it grieved him at his Heart. However this Affection of Grief, being an Imperfection that is inconsistent with the Perfection of the Divine Nature, cannot properly, but is only figuratively and by way of *Analogy* applied to God. As *Grief* in Men consists in being alone, shunning the Company of others, neither helping nor comforting them, to which is join'd an Aversion to those especially who have been the Cause of their Sorrow: So *Grief* in God denotes his Aversion to, and Departure from Sinners; from whence proceed all the Evils which befall them, whether Corporeal or Spiritual.

Repentance is a sort of *Grief*, which is properly an internal Sorrow of the Mind, whereby a Man abhors what he has done, and wishes it undone; which if it be serious, produces a Change of that Action which he detests. This is ascribed to God sometimes in Scripture, as *Gen. 6. 6.*

1 Sam. 15. 11, 35. Jerem. 18. 7, 8, 9, 10. John 3. 10. but not in a proper sense, as will appear by the following Particulars. (1.) Because it is an internal Grief of the Mind, which (as was hinted before) is an Imperfection utterly inconsistent with the Perfection of the Divine Nature. (2.) Because it arises from the Consideration of something ill done, which Man would have to be changed; the Cause whereof is Ignorance, or Impotency, or Inconstancy, all which are unbecoming the Notion we have of God. (3.) Because the Scripture says expressly, that God cannot repent: Thus 'tis said, *God is not a Man, that he should lye, neither the Son of Man that he should repent: Hath he said, and shall he not do it? Or hath he spoken, and shall he not make it good?* And again, *The Strength of Israel will not lye nor repent, for he is not a Man, that he should repent.* St. Paul says that the Gifts of God are ἀμεταμέλντα, without Repentance¹. He is likewise immutable in his Decrees: *My Counsel shall stand, and I will do all my Pleasure; I am the Lord, I change not.*

¹ Num. 23. 19. ² 1 Sam. 15. 29. ³ Rom. 11. 29. ⁴ 11. 46. 10. Mal. 3. 6.

by way of Analogy Since then upon these Accounts it appears, that God cannot be said properly to *repent*, some *Analogy* to *Repentance* must be found, namely such an Action of God as is answerable to the Actions of Men who repent; and it is this, That as Men, repenting of what they have done, alter or undo it; so God when he is said to *repent*, alters what he had done, *viz.* destroys what he had before created, and plants and builds up what he had before design'd to have destroy'd. Only this difference must be observ'd between the *Repentance* of Men and that of God: That the former proceeds from an Internal Cause, or at least may be joined with it, whilst the latter proceeds only from an External Cause, the Change that is made being owing to somewhat *without*, and not to any thing *within* the Nature of God. To render this more plain and intelligible, let us consider the Case of the *Ninivites*, wherein we have a notable Instance of the *Divine Repentance*. God had threatned the *Ninivites* to cut them off within forty Days for their Wickedness. This Threatning was denounc'd by God, by virtue of his general Decree of destroying the Wicked. The *Ninivites* upon hearing this severe Denunciation repented, and God is said to *have repented* of the Evil with which he had threatned them. Now because the Conversion of the *Ninivites* was very great, God could not punish them according to his former Decree; but according to the Law of another Decree very consistent with his general one, whereby he had appointed to grant Remission of Sins to all true Penitents, he spared them. What has been said here with respect to the *Ninivites*, may be applied to the other Instances, where God is said to *have repented*.

Nor does this argue the least Mutability or Inconstancy in God, but rather the highest Constancy and Stedfastness. For 'tis the fix'd and immutable Purpose of God to receive into Favour and to save the Believing, the Pious and the Penitent Soul; but to punish and destroy the Unbelieving, the Wicked and the Impenitent. The particular Decrees of God are only an Application of this General Decree to this or that Person according to their different State and Circumstances. To the Believing and Pious is applied the Decree of

of Grace and Salvation; to the Infidel and Impenitent, the Decree of Wrath and Damnation. From hence it follows, that as often as Men are chang'd, so often does the Application of the Divine Decree also alter; that is, when a Man, from being a Believer and Pious, becomes an Infidel and Impious, the Decree of Grace and Salvation cannot be any longer apply'd to him; but he is included under the Decree of Wrath and Damnation: And on the contrary, when he turns from his Wickedness, he is liable no longer to the Decree of Wrath and Damnation, but has that of Grace and Salvation apply'd to him. Now in all this there is no Mutability on God's part, his Counsel and Decree stands fix'd and firm; but the Change is on Man's part, which makes the Application of the General Decree to be either one way or other, according as they are either Good or Bad, Believers or Unbelievers, Penitent or Impenitent.

Against this it may be urg'd, that God does sometimes particularly threaten that which yet he does not execute. To this we reply, that this does not argue the least Change in God, because tho he does absolutely denounce his Threatnings, yet they have a tacit Condition included in them. Now a Threatning that has a tacit Condition included in it, tho it be absolutely denounc'd, is not at all chang'd, when, upon the Non-completion of the Condition, it is not executed in the same manner wherein it was denounc'd. Because if we consider the Intention of God who threatens, and who intends there should be a Condition included, it will appear that he does not revoke or disannul his Decree, but on the contrary, by that very action which he does as a Penitent, he the rather confirms and establisheth it.

But it may be ask'd, whether this *Repentance* of God be consistent with this *Prescience*? *Answ.* Yes, because (as has been already said) the Threatnings of God, tho absolutely denounc'd, yet are conditional. But to this it may be urg'd, if God, for instance, threatening the *Ninivites*, had decreed to have destroy'd them, unless they repented; how could this his Resolution be consistent with his *Prescience* of their Conversion?

Answ. Because this Conversion of the *Ninivites* would not have happen'd, had it not been for the Divine Threatning. Now God could not foreknow that the *Ninivites* would repent upon hearing his Denunciation against them, unless he had decreed to have made use of this Threatning: By virtue therefore of the Divine Prescience, it is necessary that the Threatning of God should precede his Fore-knowledg of their Conversion wrought by that Threatning.

These Affections of *Desire*, *Hope*, and *Joy*, with their Contraries, being deriv'd from *Love* and *Hatred*, the same Inferences that were drawn from them, may be concluded from these.

S E C T. VI.

Of the Universal JUSTICE of God.

be Moral Hitherto we have discours'd of the *Divine Affec-*
vertues or *tions*; we shall now go on to the other Attributes consi-
perfec- *derable* in the *Divine Will*, such as the *Moral Vertues*
ions of *or Perfections* moderating those *Affections* or *Passions*.
od. And these again have some Analogy to the Actions of Men, tho there is a very wide Difference between them. For the Vertue of a Man consists in his Conformity with the Law, and is a Habit acquir'd by frequent Acts: But God, as the Supreme Legislator, is subject to no Law, and his Vertue is the Natural Perfection of the Divine Essence. However, they agree in this, that one is a Conformity to the Law, the other to the Divine Nature.

beir Divi- Now the *Vertues* are divided into two sorts: First,
on. such as moderate all the Affections in general; and Secondly, such as moderate *Anger* in particular.

be Holi- The Vertue which moderates all the Affections in
els of *general* is *Sanctity* or *Holiness*, which is the Rectitude
od. or Purity of the Divine Nature, by which God wills and does nothing but what is right and good, and abhors all manner of Evil and Iniquity. This is often attributed to God in Scripture, as *Lev.* 11. 44, 45. & 19. 2. 1 *Pet.* 1. 15, 16. *Is.* 6. 3. *Rev.* 4. 8. 1 *Joh.* 1. 5, 6, 7. & 3. 3.

The Justice of God does not in reality differ from *His Justice*, by which he wills and does whatever is right and just, or agreeable to his Divine Nature and Perfection; to which purpose consult *Deut.* 32. 4. *Pf.* 11. 8. 25. 8. 92. 16. 119. 137. *Ezek.* 18. 25. *Zeph.* 3. 5. But all the Difference lies in the manner of considering them.

But to be more particular: The *Justice* of God is *His Universal* either *Universal* or *Particular*. The former is that Rectitude of God which we have already been describing, whereby he does whatever is just and righteous, and therefore agreeable to his most holy Nature; and can do nothing that is repugnant thereto. But for a more distinct Explication of this *Justice*, we must more closely consider the *Right* which God has over his Creatures; by which it will appear how justly and becomingly, and agreeably to the Perfection of his Nature, he behaves himself in all his Actions towards his Creatures.

The *Right* of God is that Supreme and Universal Dominion which he has over his Creatures, by virtue of which he may dispose of them as he thinks best. Now this *Right* may be consider'd with respect either to the things which are not, or which are created. As to the first of these, he has an unlimited *Right* of creating or not creating them; of creating them what he pleases; and no Creature has occasion of complaining that God created it no perfecter than it is.

As to *created* Beings, God has a sovereign *Right* and Authority over them, and of ordering concerning them whatever is agreeable to his most Holy Will. But here the Variety of his *Right* is to be consider'd according to the Variety and distinct Perfections of the Creatures. To some he has only given a *Being*, such as *Metals, Stones, &c.* To others besides a *Being*, he has given *Life*, but without *Sense*, of which nature are *Trees, Plants, &c.* Over these he has an unlimited *Right*, of taking away their *Being*, of altering their Properties, and of turning them to what Use he pleases, because they are not capable of any Injury done to them.

Besides these, there are other Creatures on whom God has bestow'd both *Life* and *Sense*, such as *Animals*;

Crea- s en- with e. mals; and others of a nobler Make whom he has endu'd with Life, Sense and Reason, as Men. Of these two, as being both endu'd with Sense, we shall at present speak together, and shall add something further hereafter concerning Men in particular. Since therefore these Creatures are capable of some Injury, the *Right* of God does in some measure seem to be limited, for 'tis requisite he should deal with them no otherwise than as is agreeable to their Natures. The Divine *Right* then with respect to these is exerted after this manner: In the first place it may take away all Sense, nay, and their very Being from them. And particularly, so far as they are capable of Pleasure, the Right of God is infinite and unlimited, it may bestow it upon them in a greater or less Degree, nay, may take away from them all Pleasure, and the Sense thereof; and on the contrary, may extend and increase it *in infinitum*. In a word, as they are capable of Grief, the Divine *Right* seems to be limited, so as it may indeed inflict some Grief upon the Creature, which shall every now and then return; however, not such as shall exceed the Benefit of Creation, and therefore not infinite in its Intensity or Extension.

Foun- tions of Right. This Sovereign *Right* is founded on these two Principles: First, whatsoever any one enjoys by the Favour of another, is only so far HIS, as pleases the Donor who bestow'd it freely and voluntarily upon him: And then Secondly, because no Creature is injur'd in not having the chiefest Benefit bestow'd upon it, or in having what is given it taken away by the Donor thereof.

Crea- e. But that we may the more thorowly consider this *Right* of God, we must before all things inquire what Foundation it hath with respect to *Innocent Creatures*, that so it may appear how far it may be extended. Now the first and proper Foundation of the Divine *Right* over Men is the Benefit bestow'd upon them by *Creation*; for the Maker has an indisputable Right over his Work; and thus this Right of God is asserted in Scripture from the Consideration of his having created all things¹. Some, we are sensible, found the

¹ Psal. 33. 6, 7, 8. Acts 17. 24. Rev. 4. 11.

Right of God upon the *Excellency* of his *Nature* above the Human, and tell us that upon that account he has an unbounded and unrestrain'd *Right* of afflicting an Innocent Creature with such Torments, as are infinite both in their Intensity and Extent. But 'tis plain that the *Excellency* of the Divine Nature cannot be the first Foundation of his *Right* over Men, since nothing can be said to excel but with respect to something that is inferior to it; and till God had created other Beings of an Inferior Order, he could not in any proper Sense be said to be *more excellent*. It therefore follows that Creation, which is the Foundation of the very Excellency of the Divine Nature over the Human, must likewise be the first and most proper Foundation of God's *Right* over Men.

Besides this Benefit of *Creation*, there is another 2. *Other* Foundation of God's *Right* over innocent Men; viz. *Benefits* The Reward of *Eternal Life*, which a Man may expect from God, and which God will bestow on an innocent Man, after he has approv'd himself by various Sufferings an Instrument of the Divine Glory. This gives God an infallible *Right* of afflicting the Innocent with various Sufferings, which he will requite with so great a Reward at the last. *which a Creatur may expect from G*

This *Right* therefore, or Authority of God ought not to be extended any farther, than the Benefit of *Creation*, and the Reward of *Eternal Life* allows; by no means must it be stretch'd in *infinitum*, so as that it may inflict Hell-Torments upon an Innocent Creature, which are infinite either in the Duration or the Intensity of them.

There are several Objections rais'd on the other side against what we have advanc'd, which we will briefly consider and refute. *An Answer to several Objections*

(1.) They say, "If God cannot afflict an innocent Creature with Hell-Torments, then 'tis because he cannot do it *de Jure Ordinato*, that is, because he will not; or else 'tis because he cannot do it *de Jure Absoluto*, by his *Absolute Right*. But then, say they, this would be to suppose Justice in God towards his Creatures without a Covenant, whereby he has oblig'd himself to them, which is absurd. *Obj. 1*

Answer. We deny the Absurdity of it; for God by creating

creating his Creatures capable of Pain, did tacitly bind himself to act with them agreeably to their Natures, or in other words, according to the Equity and Rectitude of his own Nature: So that this Creation is a tacit sort of Covenant, whereby God was willing to oblige himself to his Creatures.

2. (2.) They add, "That 'tis in God's power to have such an Infallible Right, as to punish his Creatures with Hell-torments; that is, he may create Man, prescribe him a Law, denounce eternal Punishment to the Transgressor of it, and lastly withhold from him that Grace which is sufficient to restrain him from the Transgression thereof; from whence it necessarily follows, that Man will sin, and must be eternally punish'd. Therefore God can do it absolutely.

Ans. The Unreasonableness (not to say any worse) of this Argument appears at first View; for what can be suppos'd more unjust, than for God by withholding his sufficient restraining Grace, to lay his Creatures under a fatal Necessity of sinning, and then to punish them for what they could not avoid? If this be not making God the Author of Sin, and charging him with the highest Injustice, under the Notion of his Sovereign and absolute Right, I know not what is: And whether such a Doctrine, so derogatory to the Nature of God, be fit to be maintain'd, we leave the World to judg.

3. (3.) Again they say, "That God may afflict in some degree, and for some time, an innocent Creature, that he may do it in all degrees and to all Eternity: For if one or two degrees of Punishment inflicted on the Innocent is no Breach of the Divine Justice, then neither three or four degrees of Punishment can be so: If he may afflict a Creature for one Hour, it would not be unjust for him to do so ten or more Hours, and so on to all Eternity.

Ans. This whole Argument is downright Sophistry, and hardly deserves a Reply; only we think fit to say, That tho we cannot prescribe any Bounds to the Divine Justice, within which it should be limited, yet we may venture to affirm, that Hell-torments, or such as are infinite in degree or duration, cannot be inflicted on an innocent Creature, without a manifest Reproach on the supreme Justice of God. (4.)

(4.) Lastly, they argue, “ That God can annihilate *Obj. 4.*
 “ the most holy Person in the world, much more can
 “ he torment an Innocent Person to all Eternity.
 “ That he who can do the greater, can also do the
 “ less; but Annihilation is the greater Evil of the
 “ two, because it not only robs a Man of his Well-be-
 “ ing, but even of his very Being: whereas Eternal
 “ Torments leave a Man his Being, and only rob him
 “ of his Well-being.

Ans. Eternal Torments do not only take away
 a Man's Well-being, but do likewise bring along with
 them the most miserable of Beings: Now 'tis more eli-
 gible not to be, than to be transcendently miserable to
 all Eternity; according to that of our Saviour, *Matt.*
26. 24. Wo to that Man by whom the Son of Man is
betrayed! It had been good for that Man, if he had not
been born.

Hitherto we have treated of the Divine Right over *The Right*
 Innocent Men, as capable of the Sensitive Faculty, and *of God*
 consequently of Pleasure and Pain; and now we shall *Reason*
 proceed to consider that Right over Men as endued *Creatur*
 with Reason, and this as they are without, or within
 a certain Covenant.

If they be consider'd in the first case, as without any *1. Out*
 Covenant betwixt God and them, then he has a Sove- *Covenan*
 reign and Absolute Right, either of prescribing or not *with his*
 prescribing a Law to them; nor can Man under any
 pretence whatsoever deny his Obedience to the Divine
 Laws and Precepts. However if God is pleased to
 prescribe a Law to Men, he cannot prescribe any but
 what is suitable to the Reason he has given them. Yet
 we must here make a Distinction betwixt the natural
 and the positive Laws of God; the first of which
 command or forbid what is in its own Nature either
 Good or Evil; whereas the latter neither commanding
 nor prohibiting what is either good or evil in its Na-
 ture, depend purely on the Good-will and Pleasure of
 the Legislator. We cannot therefore but admire at
 their odd Divinity, who say that God might prescribe
 things contrary to the Precepts of the Decalogue, even
 to those of the first Table, such as Idolatry, the Hatred
 of himself, &c.

But to this it may be objected, that God command-
 ed

*Objec-
an-
ed.* ed *Abraham* to offer up his Son *Isaac* ¹, and the *Israe-
lites* to rob the *Egyptians* ². To which it may be an-
swered, That the Precepts of the second Table, so far
as they respect the mutual Right and Good betwixt
Man and Man, have indeed upon that account an in-
trinsical Probity, so that no Man ought to violate
them; however this does not hinder, but that God may
by his absolute Power, for weighty Reasons, and in a
particular Case, prescribe what may seem contrary to
these natural Laws; as he did in the Case of *Abraham*
and the *Israelites*.

But secondly, when God prescribes a Law to Men,
he has a Right and Authority of enacting or not enact-
ing it, with what Rewards and Punishments he pleases:
But with this Difference, that God can increase the
Rewards *in infinitum*; whereas the Punishments ought
not to exceed the Offence.

*In Co-
unt.* When Laws are thus enacted, and Man plac'd with-
in the Covenant, God seems in some measure to pre-
scribe Bounds to his Power and Authority. For (1.)
Justice requires that he should not set a Law to Man
which is above his Strength, or if it be, then that he
should grant him a supernatural Power to obey that
Law. (2.) Upon obeying the Law, God cannot de-
ny Man the Rewards which he has promis'd, without
prejudice to his Justice. (3.) Upon the Violation and
Contempt of the Law, God has a Right of justly pu-
nishing his Creatures, if he pleases, with the same Pu-
nishments that he has enacted in the Law.

*Jus-
of God
not ne-
wily
aire
t he
ld pu-
Sin-
s.* However it does not from thence follow that the
Vindictive Justice of God is so absolutely essential to
the Divine Nature, as that he cannot, without a Vio-
lation of his Justice, pass by or pardon any Sin. And
for the Proof of this, we offer the following Argu-
ments: (1.) Because there is Mercy with God, whose
Acts do far exceed the Acts of Punishment and Ven-
geance. (2.) Because it is lawful for any Person, with-
out any offence to Justice, to pardon as much as he plea-
ses, provided it be not another's Interest to require
the rigid Execution of his Right. (3.) If God by his

¹ Gen. 22. 2. ² Exod. 12. 35, 36.

Vindictive Justice cannot pass by Sins unpunish'd, then he punishes by a natural and absolute Necessity: but this is absurd. (4.) God may inflict a milder Punishment than the Sin deserves, according to that of the Psalmist, *He hath not dealt with us after our Sins, nor rewarded us according to our Iniquities*'. (5.) Because God may bring a Sinner to Repentance, which he could never do, were he bound in Justice to punish him for every Offence.

'Tis true there are several Objections rais'd against what we have said, which we shall briefly set down, and as briefly answer. *An Answer to several Objections*

First, they say, That 'tis natural to God to be just. *Obj. 1.*
Ans. (1.) The Justice of God is natural, but the Exertions thereof are free, as those of Mercy, which is likewise natural to God. (2.) What is natural may be taken in a twofold Sense, either as it depends merely on Principles of Nature, as 'tis natural for Fire to burn; or as it is congruous with Nature, but yet does not proceed to an Act without the free Determination of the Will, and in this Sense 'tis natural for a Man to laugh. In this latter Sense Vindictive Justice is natural to God, *i. e.* when he punishes he exercises an Act that is agreeable to his Justice, but yet he punishes freely.

In the second place they say, That 'tis the Property of Justice to give every Man his due, but Punishments are due to Sinners, therefore, &c. *Obj. 2.*
Ans. Every one's Due is that which he has a Right to, and which cannot be deny'd him without the highest Injustice. But this is not to be understood of evil Things, but only of those that are good. Now no Man can be said to have a Right of enduring Punishments; nor is it any Injustice to a Man not to suffer the Punishment he deserves for his Sins; on the contrary, it ought to be esteem'd as a Benefit.

Thirdly, they say, That it is the Duty of a just Judg, not to pass by any Sin unpunish'd; but God is a just Judg, therefore, &c. *Obj. 3.*
Ans. This is true indeed with respect to a substituted Judg, who depends upon ano-

ther Superiour Power, and who cannot reprieve or pardon without his Superiour's Consent; but this does not hold good with respect to God who is the Sovereign Lord, and can by his own Authority remit when he pleases, provided another's Interest does not rigidly require his Right to be executed.

4. Fourthly, They urge that God would do injury to his Justice if he did not punish Sin. *Ans.* (1.) No body can be said to injure himself who remits any thing of his own Right. (2.) The Divine Justice does not indeed allow, that harden'd Sinners and impenitent Contemners of his Law and Grace should go unpunish'd; however, it is no Blemish to the Divine Majesty to pardon the Penitent; 'tis rather a Manifestation of greater Glory in thus declaring his Equity and Mercy, by which Men are won over to fear him; according to that of the Psalmist, *There is Forgiveness with thee, that thou mayest be fear'd*, Psal. 130. 4.

5. Fifthly, 'Tis farther said, that the Judgment of God is, *that they who commit such things are worthy of Death*, and that *it is a righteous thing with God to recompense Tribulation to them that trouble you*. *Ans.* (1.) He who has a Right may indeed very justly exact it, however he is not oblig'd to it; nay, they are very much commended who remit of their Right. (2.) Both the Passages here produc'd relate to very heinous Sins, in which the Offenders persevere without any Repentance: And we freely own that it is inconsistent with the Divine Majesty to let them go unpunish'd; but the Case is quite otherwise with respect to true Penitents, as we have already observ'd.

6. Sixthly and lastly they say, God necessarily hates Sin, and therefore he as necessarily punishes it, because he cannot demonstrate his Hatred any other way. *Ans.* (1.) There is a wide Difference between Hatred, which is an internal Displacency and Aversion, and Punishment, which is something external; but God does nothing necessarily which is without himself. God does indeed necessarily hate Sin as soon as 'tis com-

mitted, yet he does not necessarily punish it, nay sometimes he defers the Punishment for a long season, as in the Case of the Inhabitants of the old World, and in his putting off the last Judgment. (2.) Men may hate the Sins of others, and yet not hate their Persons, but endeavour by Repentance to bring them to Salvation: And why may not God do as much? (3.) As to what they add, that God cannot demonstrate his Hatred any other way than by punishing the Sin; we say that the Demonstration of the Divine Hatred is not so natural as that Hatred itself: For 'tis natural for God to hate and abhor Sin, but he is at liberty whether he will, or will not demonstrate his Hatred by punishing it.

Upon the whole matter then we cannot but admire *The inconsistent Opinions of some Divines.* at the inconsistent Opinions of some Divines; who on one hand stretch the Divine Right and Authority so far, as to say God has a Power of Punishing an innocent Man to all Eternity without any Breach of Justice: and yet, on the other hand, circumscribe it within such narrow Limits with respect to shewing Favour to a Sinner, as to deny that God can without breach of Justice pardon any even the least Offence without Satisfaction; as if he had a greater Power of punishing than of shewing Favour.

From what has been thus largely said of the Divine Holiness and Justice, we may learn, First, because God is Holy, how we ought to be Holy likewise, and earnestly endeavour to render our Actions more and more conformable to his. Secondly, because he has a Sovereign Right and Authority over all things, we ought, (1.) Humbly to submit our selves to him, and acquiesce in his Will, whatever it be¹. (2.) To pray for Benefits from him, and to return Thanks to him for Mercies receiv'd². (3.) To be patient under Adversity, as proceeding from the Supreme Lord, of which we have in Scripture the Examples of *Eli*³, *Job*⁴, and our Saviour *Jesus Christ*⁵, besides several others.

¹ 1st. 45. 9, 10. Rom. 9. 20. ² Phil. 4. 6. Eph. 5. 20. Coloss. 3. 17. Heb. 13. 15. ³ 1st Sam. 3. 8. ⁴ Job 1. 21. ⁵ Matt. 26. 39.

(4.) Never to murmur against God, whether he commands us some hard thing, or tries, or visits, or punishes us for our Sins; or on any other account whatsoever. (5.) To obey God with Fear, because he has a Power not only of commanding, but likewise of punishing us according to our Demerits, if we prove disobedient¹. (6.) Never for the sake of Man to do any thing which God forbids, or to omit that which he commands². (7.) To make use with a quiet Conscience of those things, of which the Sovereign Lord of all has granted us a Property and free Use³.

S E C T. VII.

Of the particular JUSTICE of God.

*the parti-
lar Jus-
e of God
sider'd.* The particular Justice of God is that whereby he gives to every one his Due: This properly relates to Man not consider'd in a State of Innocence, and out of all Covenant with God, for that is the Object of Universal Justice; but as he is subject to some Divine Law or Covenant. Not that a Creature can lay claim to any thing he can call his Due from the Creator, but it is only so far his Due, as God has been pleas'd by Covenant and Promise to make it such. Now this Due, which God by his particular Justice gives to every Man, may be consider'd, first, according to the Strictness of the Law, by which a proportionable Reward is due to the Obedient, and Punishment to the Disobedient: And secondly, according to the Equity and good Will of the Legislator, which is likewise Reward or Punishment. The Reward is Eternal Life, promis'd likewise to those who repent: Now tho' this so far exceeds all our Obedience and good Works, as no comparison can be made between the one and the other, yet God is said to bestow it on the Obedient and truly Penitent out of Justice⁴. Not that he can be strictly

¹ Mal. 1. 6. Mar. 10. 28. ² Acts 5. 29. ³ 1 Cor. 10. 25, 26, &c. 1 Tim. 4. 4. Tit. 1. 15. Rom. 14. *throughout the whole Chapter.* ⁴ 2 Thess. 1. 6, 7. 2 Tim. 4. 8. Heb. 6. 10.

bound to the bestowing of it; but as the very Promise proceeded from Free-grace, so also the Equity of the Promiser seems to require, that he should not deny the Reward, which he by his Promise oblig'd himself to bestow.

The Case is not the same with respect to Punishment, which is justly due to Sinners, and when 'tis inflicted, 'tis inflicted justly on them: But yet, as we have already seen, since the inflicting of Punishment is the peculiar Right of God, he may without any Violation of the Divine Justice, remit the Punishment, provided it be only to the Penitent, and not to harden'd and impenitent Sinners.

This Justice in punishing Sinners, is conspicuous in all the Divine Judgments exercis'd in this World against them, as is evident by many Instances recorded in Holy Writ; but will be still more conspicuous at the last Day of Judgment, when he shall render to all Men, according to their Works; and shall judg all Men, both Jew and Gentile, Greek and Barbarian, Bond and Free, without any respect of Persons.

Under this Justice of God are comprehended three other Vertues: Or rather by the Name of these Vertues the Justice of God is represented to us. The first is his *Truth*, which sometimes denotes his Rectitude; but as we take it in this place, it is a Conformity of the Words with the Divine Mind and Actions. Whatsoever then God affirms, commands, promises or threatens, is Truth, and we must believe it without any reserve. Secondly, another Vertue comprehended under the Divine Justice, is *Fidelity* or Faithfulness, whereby God constantly performs whatever he has said or affirm'd; and it has a more especial regard to the fulfilling of what he has promis'd. The third Vertue is *Sincerity*, by which he never by Word or Deed declares any thing that is contrary to what he has decreed within himself. Therefore they are mightily to blame who rob God of this Attribute, who are not a-

*The True
Faithful-
ness, and
Sincerity
of God.*

¹ Matt. 16. 27. Rom. 2. 6. 2 Cor. 5. 10. Gal. 6. 5, 7. Rev. 20. 13. ² 1 Pet. 1. 17. Rom. 2. 11. Eph. 6. 9. Col. 3. 25. Acts 10. 34. Rev. 20. 12. Matt. 8. 11, 12.

fraid to say, that there is a twofold Will in God, one Secret, the other Reveal'd, and sometimes so clashing with and contradictory to one another, that by his reveal'd Will he may command many Men to do, what by his secret Will he decrees they shall not do: Who farther teach us that God invites to Salvation those whom he had reprobated by an Eternal and Irrevocable Decree, without any regard to their Works; or threatens Death to those, whom he had elected to Salvation by the same Decree. This is so harsh a Doctrine, and so derogatory to the Divine Attributes of Wisdom; Justice and Goodness, that it cannot but offend the Minds and grate the Ears of every good Man; and yet 'tis maintain'd either in express Terms, or by direct Consequence, by too many in the World.

he Use.

From what has been briefly hinted at concerning the Particular Justice of God, we may learn, (1.) Because God is just, and will judg all Men righteously without respect of Persons, to walk pure and undefil'd before him¹. (2.) Because he is faithful and true in fulfilling his Promises, we ought to rely upon God in the midst of Adversity, and not repine at the Delay of his Promises, being sure that our Hope and Confidence will not be in vain in the Lord²: For a thousand Years are with the Lord but as one Day.

S E C T. VIII.

Of the Clemency, Long-suffering, and Severity of God.

The Vertues moderating Anger are three, *Clemency*, *Long-suffering*, and *Severity*; the two first of which consist in remitting, mitigating, or deferring the Punishment, and the third in inflicting of it.

he Clemency of
The first is Clemency or Goodness, whereby God is not angry with Sinners but upon very weighty grounds,

¹ 1 Pet. 1. 17. ² 2 Pet. 3. 11, 12, &c. ³ Heb. 10. 36, 37. Jam. 5. 7, 8. 2 Pet. 3. 8.

and with the utmost Moderation. It is more especially conspicuous in these three things. (1.) In God's being averse to Punishment, being more inclinable to pardon than to punish¹. (2.) In that his Punishments are often milder, than the Heinousness of the Sin deserves²: Which is to be understood of the Punishments inflicted by God on Men in this World, in order to bring them to Repentance; not of those Eternal Torments, which he justly imposes on the hardened and impenitent Sinner. (3.) That he is very inclinable to pardon, as soon as he sees any Signs of Repentance in the Offender³.

And here again, they who maintain the Doctrine of Absolute Predestination, rob God of this Attribute of Goodness or Clemency. For what Man that judges things aright, can suppose that God is merciful towards Sinners, that are guilty thro their own Fault and Will, and graciously remits the Punishment which they justly deserve; and yet supposes him at the same time, by an irrevocable and eternal Decree, to have reprobated the Innocent to the Eternal Torments of Hell; or, which is all one, to have predestinated to Eternal Destruction the Posterity of *Adam* for his Transgression only, of which they were not, and could not be conscious?

The Maintainers of Absolute Predestination rob God of this Attribute.

The second Vertue moderating the Divine Anger is *The Longanimity* or Long-suffering, which differs from Clemency not in reality, but only in the Duration of it. By this Long-suffering God bears with the Sins of Men so far, and waits for their Repentance so long, till at last his Patience being weary'd by their Obstinacy, he decrees to shew the Severity of his Judgments towards them. This Attribute is ascrib'd to God, *Rom. 2. 4. Ch. 9. 9, 22. 2 Pet. 3. 9.* and elsewhere. Of this God gave a remarkable Instance towards the Inhabitants of the Old World, bearing with their Wickedness for the space of 120 Years, whilst he sent [†] *Noah* the Preacher of Righteousness to them; as also to the

The Longanimity of God.

¹ Ezek. 18. 23. & 33. 11. If. 28. 21. Lam. 3. 33. ² Ps. 103. 10. ³ Jer. 18. 17. Psal. 103. 9, &c. ⁴ 2 Pet. 3. 20.

People of the *Jews* ¹; and now in procrastinating the Day of Judgment ².

be Use.

From the Consideration of these Attributes of the Divine Clemency and Longanimity, we may very reasonably infer; (1.) If we should fall into any Sin, not to despair, but endeavour after Repentance with a full Assurance of Pardon. (2.) That we should hasten our Conversion, because God only exerts his Clemency in Judgments of Visitation, and in this Life, which is uncertain. (3.) That by the Example of God we be induc'd to exercise Charity, Clemency and Forbearance towards our Neighbours.

The Severity of God,

The next Vertue or Divine Perfection is *Severity*, which consists in punishing the Sinner. However 'tis not to be suppos'd that this is repugnant to the Clemency and Long-suffering of God, since these go before Severity, which is not exerted, till he perceives that Sinners abuse his Patience and prove Obstinate and Impenitent, notwithstanding all the Methods and Overtures of Grace and Mercy afforded and offer'd to them. This Severity of God in Scripture is call'd *ἀποτομία*, a Cutting off ³; and God, upon that account, is stil'd *Jealous* ⁴, a *consuming Fire* ⁵, and a *God of Revenge* ⁶.

Conspicuous in the Divine Judgments.

The Divine *Severity* is sometimes conspicuous in this World, when God cuts off a whole Nation or People in Judgment for their Sins, as in the case of the Old World destroy'd by the Flood, of *Sodom* and *Gomorrhah* destroy'd by Fire and Brimstone from Heaven, and of the *Jews*, whom God after many Provocations rejected and threw out of his Embraces: Yet in all these Cases it is evident, that God did not exercise his Severity towards them, till after they had fill'd up the Measure of their Iniquities, and their Sins cry'd loudly to Heaven for Vengeance. But this Severity will chiefly appear in the other World, when God shall pour out the utmost of his Wrath, Anger and Displeasure upon those Sinners, who thro the Hardness and Impenitency of

¹ 2 Chron. 36. 15. ² 2 Pet. 3. 9. ³ Rom. 11. 22.

⁴ Exod. 20. 5, 6. Deut. 5. 9, 10. ⁵ Deut. 4. 24. Heb. 12. 29. ⁶ Ps. 94. 1. Nahum 1. 2.

their Hearts have abus'd the Kindness and Long-suffering of God, and have treasur'd up to themselves Wrath against the Day of Wrath.

But there is another sort of Divine Severity, where- *Even some*
by God sometimes cuts off the Offenders in the very *times in*
Act, without waiting for their Repentance: And *cutting a*
there may be very good Reasons assign'd for such a *notorious*
Proceeding; as (1.) That tho God's Anger may seem *Offenders*
to be rais'd against this one Act of theirs, yet more *in the ve*
Enormities may have been committed by them, for *Act.*
which God is pleas'd to exercise his Wrath at last upon
this single Provocation; an instance of which we have
in *Herod*, who for his Pride was stricken by God and
devour'd by Worms, who by his Cruelties to *James*,
Peter, and others, was notoriously wicked before.
(2.) He who is thus punish'd for one single Offence
may have experienc'd so great a Share in the Favour
of God, as they never had with whose Sins God had
long forborn; so that this Abundance of the Divine
Grace towards them, may be answerable to the Longa-
nimity exercis'd towards others. (3.) The Sin might
have been easily avoided, and unless it had immediately
met with a severe Punishment, it might have prov'd
of an ill Consequence. (4.) And lastly, the Sin may
be of a very enormous and crying Nature, especially
if attended with that Circumstance of Time, wherein
God, by shewing Signs and Wonders, and by a visible
Distribution of the Gifts of the Holy Ghost, demon-
strates his Grace in a more especial manner. After all,
the Instances of this Divine Severity, recorded in Holy
Writ, are so very rare, that one may fairly conclude
that the Mercy of God does by far surpass his Severity.

From this Attribute we may learn, (1.) To serve *The Use.*
God with a religious Fear and Sollicitude, because he
is a consuming Fire. (2.) Not to indulge our selves
in the commission of any one Sin, under a pretence
that it is but a small one, and of no great moment;
since we know not whether what seems small to us will
be so esteem'd by God, and since 'tis evident that God
has been angry at Offences which seem'd but small.

S E C T. IX.

Of the OMNIPOTENCY of God.

the Power of God. Next to the Will follows the Power of God, by which he executes the Decrees of his Will: and because this Power is infinite, so as that it may extend it self to all things, and be hinder'd by no other Cause, it is therefore usually call'd *Omnipotence*, and is often attributed to God in Scripture. This appears in the Miracles which were wrought, surpassing all created Power, and which could not be done but by God alone; but more especially in the Creation of the World out of Nothing, wherein God shew'd the Extent of his *Omnipotency*.

its Object The Object of this Power is every thing that is possible, that is, not only that which God has decreed to be done, but also whatever in its own Nature is capable of being done, and therefore may be decreed by God to be done. However, that which implies a Contradiction, either in the things themselves, or to the Nature and Perfection of the Doer, cannot be said to be the Object of the Divine Power. Some things are repugnant to the Perfection of God; either naturally, as if a Man should say that God could die, sleep, &c. to affirm which is as much as to say, that God was not God: or else morally, as that he should lye, or deceive or afflict innocent Persons with everlasting Torments, the two former of which imply imperfection, and all of 'em are repugnant to the Divine Attributes and Perfections. Some other things there are which in themselves may imply a Contradiction, either directly, or by plain Consequence; as if a Man should say that at one and the same time a thing exists and does not exist, that one and the same Body may all of it be in distinct and several Places at once, &c. These things being contradictory in their own nature, are not possible, and therefore cannot be the Object of the Divine Power.

But to pass by all nice Speculations of this nature, and without enquiring whether God could so far invert the Course of Nature as to make things contradictory in themselves

themselves not to be contradictory, (the Discussion of *Three things necessary to be believ'd concerning the Divine Power.* which Subtilties we leave to the Schools) it is enough for establishing the Worship of and Reliance on God, that we firmly believe these three things concerning the Divine Power. (1.) That God can bestow upon us all those things that are necessary for our due Performance of the Worship that he requires of us; such as Life, and whatever is requisite for the Support thereof¹; together with all Spiritual and Supernatural Gifts². (2.) That he is able to prevent any Violence from being offer'd to us his Worshippers, by the Devil or his Ministers, whereby we may be incapable of obeying him. (3.) And lastly, That he is able to give to his Worshippers the good things which he has promis'd them, and to inflict those Punishments on the Despisers of him, which he has threaten'd.

The Use we ought to make of this Divine Attribute *The Use.* amounts to this: (1.) That we fear God, because he can do all things, and consequently can punish us severely, unless we do fear him³. (2.) That we pray to him in all our Necessities with Faith, being assur'd that he is able to do all things, even more than we can ask⁴. (3.) That whilst we obey him we be not afraid of the Power of any Enemy, not of the Devil himself: because no Person can hinder him from bestowing upon his Worshippers the Salvation which he has promis'd them⁵. (4.) That we rely upon all the Promises of God of what kind soever, tho considering the ordinary Course of Nature, the Completion of them may seem impossible; of which we have a notable Instance in *Abraham*, who hop'd against Hope, was not stagger'd at the Promise thro Unbelief, but was stedfastly persuaded, that what God had promis'd he was also able to perform⁶. (5.) That we readily obey all God's Commands, even such as may seem to be repugnant to the Execution of the Divine Promise, and to cut off all Hopes from us of enjoying it.

¹ Acts 17. 24, &c. ² 2 Pet. 1. 3. ³ Matt. 10. 28. Jer. 5. 22. ⁴ Eph. 3. 20. ⁵ Ps. 23. 4. Joh. 10. 28, 29. Rom. 8. 38, 39. Matt. 16. 18. ⁶ Rom. 4. 20, 21.

S E C T. X.

Of the BLESSEDNESS and GLORY of God.

be Glory The Divine Attributes to be treated of in the last
God, place are the *Blessedness* and *Glory* of God; both which
 are easily comprehended by what has been hitherto
 said of the Divine Essence and its Attributes. For the
 Divine Glory is that Excellency whereby God is above
 all Creatures, and in an infinite Degree excels them:
 which is very frequently ascrib'd to God in the *Psalms*,
 and in that Angelical Hymn, Luk. 2. 13. *Glory to God*
on High, &c.

conspicuous 'Tis true indeed, God is always in possession of this
his Excellency, *i. e.* his Essence is so excellent and perfect,
works. that he can when he pleases manifest the Glory of it.
 However, 'tis as certain that with respect to us he
 would not be glorious, unless by certain Signs he shew'd
 us his Attributes, and made them as it were visible to
 us; that is, unless he wrought some extraordinary
 Works, in which the Excellency of his Attributes
 shine forth, whether they be Favours or Punishments.
 Hence it is that the Scripture attributes Glory to God,
 when in any wonderful Work, such as Creation, Re-
 demption, and punishing obstinate Sinners, it proclaims
 his Attributes of *Mercy, Justice, Fidelity, Wisdom,*
and Power.

be Bless- From this Excellency and Glory of God proceeds
edness of his *Blessedness*. For 'tis impossible, having an Essence
ed. so excellent, and glorious, and perfect, but that he
 should be supremely happy. He is in possession of all
 Good, nay, is himself the Supreme Good, and conse-
 quently cannot but be perfectly happy in the Fruition
 of himself. Nor can he be depriv'd of this his Hap-
 piness, since he is Eternal and Immutable, subject to
 no Corruption or Alteration; and without this *Bles-*
sedness he could not be God.

be Use. From what has been thus briefly deliver'd of the
Glory and Blessedness of God, we may learn: First,
 because God is transcendently glorious, all things ought
 to

to be refer'd to his Glory, according to that of the Apostle, *Whether you eat, or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the Glory of God*, 1 Cor. 10. 31. And we ought to promote this Glory of God as well in Words as in Deeds. Secondly, Because God is happy, we ought, (1.) To aspire after Happiness, that so we may be with God; and perform as in the Presence of God whatsoever conduces to that End. (2.) We ought courageously to endure all manner of Adversities and Afflictions which befall us from wicked Men for Righteousness-sake, because there is no Comparison to be made between the Afflictions of this Life and the Eternal Happiness of the next, *Rom. 8. 18. 2 Cor. 4. 18, 19.*

C H A P. V.

Of God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.

Hitherto we have treated of the Essence of God in the Abstract; what we shall farther do in this Chapter is to explain who this God is, to whom, according to the Scriptures, this Divine Nature is attributed, *viz.* the *Father*, the *Son*, and the *Holy Ghost*; for of these *Three* frequent mention is made in Scripture. Thus *Matt. 3. 16, 17. When the Son was baptiz'd, the Father from Heaven by an audible Voice bore Testimony to the Son; and the Holy Ghost descended upon him, hovering over him as a Dove.* So again, the Apostles are commanded to *baptize all Nations in the Name of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost*¹. And Christ tells his Disciples, *I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever, even the Spirit of Truth*². To the same purpose you may consult those other Passages of Scripture, which speak the same thing, and make ex-

¹ Matt. 28. 19. ² John 14. 16, 26.

press mention of the three Persons in the Deity, viz. *Father, Son, and Holy Ghost* ¹.

various O-
pinions a-
bout the
Doctrine of
the Tri-
nity.

Tho by these Places of Scripture the Doctrine of the *Trinity* in the Godhead is put beyond all dispute, and has been receiv'd by the unanimous Consent of all Christians, yet very great Contests have been and are still on foot about the manner of the *Unity of the Trinity*. This Doctrine has in all Ages of Christianity afforded more or less matter of Dispute, whilst Men not contented with the Simplicity of the Holy Scripture, have by their nice Subtilties and intricate Questions perplex'd this Truth, render'd it obscure, and instead of edifying, have miserably divided and torn the Church to pieces. *Sabellius* and his Followers maintaining the *Unity* of the Divine Essence, have deny'd the *Trinity* of Persons; whilst others appearing as Advocates of the *Trinity*, have become guilty of *Tritheism*. *Arius* in proving the Son to be inferior to the Father, converts him to a mere Creature; and *Macedonius* not distinguishing the Holy Ghost from his Gifts, has deny'd his Divinity. Lastly, others in explaining the *Trinity in Unity*, have made use of such Metaphors, as are idle, trifling, and unbecoming the Nature of God.

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Thus have those Men far'd, who by their *finite* Reason would pretend to comprehend and illustrate a Mystery, that is *Infinite*, Incomprehensible, and above the Reach of their Reason. God has often suffer'd them to be deluded and seduc'd into Error, on purpose to humble their Pride, and to terrify others from the like bold Attempt. We shall therefore wave those nice, intricate and dangerous Speculations: what we shall offer on this Sublime and Divine Mystery shall be in the very Words which the Holy Ghost in Scripture has dictated to us, as far as possible, designedly abstaining from all Expressions of Human Invention.

In the first place then, these three, *Father, Son, and Holy Ghost*, are represented to us in Scripture as Individual Subsistencies, endu'd with Life, Understanding,

¹ John 15. 26. 1 Cor. 12. 4, 5, 6. 2 Cor. 13. 13. 1 Pet. 1. 2. 1 John 5. 7.

Will and Power, and doing such Works as are futable to such Individuals: And hence they are commonly stil'd by Divines *Three Persons*, a Word not indeed taken from Scripture, but of long and early use in the Ages of the Church. As to the *Father*, there is no necessity of proving his *Personality*, since all Divines are agreed about it. And 'tis as evident with respect to the *Son*, for to him is attributed in Scripture Subsistence¹, Life², Understanding³, Will⁴, Power⁵, and Works⁶. The Scripture teaches us as much of the *Holy Ghost*, ascribing likewise to him Subsistence⁷, Life⁸, Understanding⁹, Will¹⁰, Power¹¹, and Operations agreeable to his Person, such as Creation¹², Preservation¹³, Regeneration¹⁴, Sanctification and Justification¹⁵, with the like; none of which Operations, that are every where ascrib'd to the *Holy Ghost* in Scripture, can be apply'd to any other but a Person that has a Subsistence.

Secondly, the Divine Perfections and Attributes are ascrib'd to these Three, from whence we fairly conclude, that the Godhead is common to them all. As to God the *Father*, there lies no Dispute; but with respect to the *Son* and *Holy Ghost*, we shall in two distinct Sections prove the same of them, and consequently that they essentially partake of the same Divine Nature with the Father, and are, together with Him, *One God, Unity in Trinity, and Trinity in Unity, which ought to be worship'd*. Athan. Creed.

¹ John 1. 1. ² John 6. 57. ³ John 1. 18. ⁴ Mat. 11. 27. ⁵ Phil. 3. 21. ⁶ John 5. 17. ⁷ 1 John 5. 8. Mat. 28. 18. ⁸ 1 Cor. 2. 10, 11. Is. 11. 2. ⁹ Rom. 8. 2. ¹⁰ 1 Cor. 12. 11. ¹¹ Eph. 3. 16. Is. 11. 2. ¹² Ps. 33. 6. ¹³ Pl. 104. ¹⁴ Tit. 3. 5. ¹⁵ 1 Cor. 6. 11.

S E C T. I.

Of God the SON, the second Person of the Holy and Undivided Trinity.

the Divine Perfections attributed the Son. To begin then with the *Son*, to whom the Name of God is expressly apply'd in Scripture. Thus 'tis said, *the Word was God*, John 1. 1. and he is stil'd, Rom. 9. 5. *God blessed for ever*. And again, Heb. 1. 8, 9. *But unto the Son he saith, Thy Throne, O God, is for ever and ever, &c. Thou hast loved Righteousness, and hated Iniquity; therefore God, even thy God, hath anointed thee with the Oil of Gladness above thy Fellows.* This Appellation of the *Son* is a manifest Demonstration of his Divine Generation from, and of his partaking of the same Divine Nature with the *Father*.

True indeed it is that others are stiled the *Sons of God* in Scripture, either (1.) upon the account of Creation, as owing their Original to God; and in this sense *Adam* is stil'd *the Son of God*¹, and *we* are also *all of his Offspring*², and the Angels are said to be the *Sons of God*³: Or (2.) upon the account of some Excellency, wherein they resemble God, and thus Magistrates and Princes are call'd *Sons of the most High*⁴: Or (3.) upon the account of some signal Favour confer'd upon them, and in this sense *Israel* is stil'd the *Son of God*⁵: Or (4.) upon the account of Adoption⁶.

However *Jesus Christ* in a more eminent and peculiar manner is the *Son of God*, and hence is he stil'd *his only begotten*, and *his own Son*, Joh. 3. 16. Rom. 8. 32. And God the Father is all along in the New Testament call'd *the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ*: From whence it evidently follows, that our Saviour for a singular and peculiar reason is the very *Son of God*, by a Divine and Eternal Generation.

¹ Luke 3. 37. ² Acts 17. 29. ³ Job 1. 6. ⁴ Psalm 82. 6. ⁵ Hos. 11. 1. ⁶ John 1. 12. Eph. 1. 5. Gal. 3. 26. & 4. 5.

He is often indeed in Scripture call'd the Son of God *Jesus* with respect even to his human Nature, and that upon the account of his Conception by the Holy Ghost *Christ*, of his Mediatorial Office, of his being rais'd from the Dead *the Son of God*, and of his being exalted to the right Hand *by Eternal Generation* of God in the Heavens¹. But this Appellation would not be a sufficient Proof of *Jesus Christ's* being the true and Eternal Son of God, were there not other Texts of Scripture to evince that he is such by a true, but secret and ineffable Generation; not only before he was made Man and born of the Virgin *Mary*, but also before all Worlds. We shall pass by such Places of Scripture alledg'd to this purpose by some Divines, the Force of which may be eluded by a specious Explication, and shall only make choice of those Texts that prove the thing directly, and cannot be understood any otherwise without great Force and Wresting of their true and genuine Sense.

The first Place we shall produce to prove the Eternal Generation of the Son of God, is Joh. 1. 1, &c. *Prov'd 1. From In the Beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God, &c. Joh. 1. 1. &c.* That *Beginning* in this Place is to be understood of the Origin of all things, before which the Word was, may be evinc'd by these Arguments: (1.) Because this Expression agrees with that of *Moses*, Gen. 1. 1. *In the Beginning God created the Heavens and the Earth*; which no body questions but that it means there the Beginning of all things. (2.) Because by this means 'tis easily intelligible how the Word was with God: for he could not have been before all Created Beings unless he had been with God. (3.) Because 'tis added, *all things were made by him, and without him was nothing made that was made*; now all things could not have been made by him, had not he himself been existing before.

Socinus and his Followers put a quite different Interpretation upon these Words, and understand the *Beginning* here to refer to the Beginning of the Gospel-Dispensation, and not to the Beginning of the World: That *as Moses* in treating of the Creation began his History with that Expression, so *St. John* in giving us an ac-

The Socinian Interpretation of that Text forc'd and absurd.

¹ Luk. 1. 35. ² Acts 13. 32, 33. ³ Heb. 1. 4.

count of the New Creation, might very well use the same Phrase, and say, *The Word was with God*; because in the Beginning, before *John the Baptist* began to preach, he was known and dear to God, and appointed by him to preach the Gospel: or else his being with God may imply his being taken up into Heaven, to receive the Commands of God, as being the immediate Interpreter of the Divine Will, and Minister of the Gospel. As to what is added, *All things were made by him*, &c. they explain it thus: That all things which were done for the announcing and confirmation of the Gospel, were done by him; so that nothing that was done, even by the Apostles themselves, was done without him. But how wretched and forc'd an Interpretation of the Words of St. *John* is this! What Man of but common Sense cannot perceive the Weakness and Unreasonableness of it? Besides, it is full of Absurdities and Difficulties; for, (1.) It is not at all likely that *John the Evangelist* would have vindicated the Gospel at the very beginning from all Suspicion of Novelty, by saying that Christ was the Word of God, when *John the Baptist* preach'd. Nor is it credible, at least 'tis prov'd by no History whatsoever, that any Persons have prefer'd *John* before *Christ*, because he began to preach before him. (2.) By this Interpretation of *Sociinus*, this Expression, *And the Word was God*, viz. in the Beginning, cannot be consistent with it self: for he shew'd no Signs of his Divinity in the beginning; but after he had began his Prophetical Office by preaching, before which he was unknown, and look'd upon to be the Carpenter's Son. (3.) These Words, *All things were made by him*, would, according to their Interpretation, be inconsistent with what goes before and comes after: all which is very harsh and forc'd.

From
h. 8. 58. Another place we think fit to produce for the proof of the Divinity and Eternal Generation of *Jesus Christ*, is *John* 8. 58. where our Lord tells the *Jews*, *Verily, verily I say unto you, before Abraham was, I AM*: that is, before *Abraham* had a Being, I did partake of the Divine Nature, and was *Jehovah*, *I AM*. This Appellation, which Christ gives of himself, was so well known to the *Jews*, and was always look'd upon by them

them as the proper and peculiar Name of God, that upon this Declaration of *Jesus, I AM*, they took up Stones to stone him; as being guilty (as they suppos'd) of Blasphemy; since he, whom they thought to be no more than a Man, did by this Expression call himself God. What the *Socinians* have to object against this plain Text, is so very trifling and foolish, that we will not so much as mention it, or give it an Answer.

Besides the foremention'd Places, there are others ^{3. From} which evince the same thing, as Col. 1. 15, 16, 17. ^{Col. 1. 15} *Who is the Image of the Invisible God, the Firstborn of* ^{16, 17.} *every Creature: For by him were all things created that* ^{Heb. 1. 10} *are in Heaven, and that are in Earth, visible or invis-* ^{11. Rev.} *ible, whether they be Thrones, or Dominions, or Princi-* ^{3. 14.} *palities, or Powers; all things were created by him, and for him; and he is before all things, and by him all things consist.* Again, Heb. 1. 10. 11. speaking of Christ, by whom the last and clearest Manifestation of God's Will was made to Mankind, 'tis said, *Thou Lord in the Beginning hast laid the Foundation of the Earth, and the Heavens are the Works of thy Hands: They shall perish, but thou remainest, and they shall wax old as doth a Garment; and as a Vesture shalt thou fold them up, and they shall be chang'd, but thou art the same, and thy Years shall not fail.* Lastly, Rev. 3. 14. it is said, *These things saith the Amen, the faithful and true Witness, the Beginning of the Creation of God.*

From all these Texts it appears that *Jesus Christ* had an Existence before all things that were created, and they cannot in any sense be interpreted to signify the Reformation, or New Creation of the World by *Jesus Christ*. For He who was in the Beginning with God, and was God; He who made all things, and without whom nothing was made that was made; He who had an Existence before *Abraham*, and was the first Begotten of all Creatures, &c. He, I say, had a Being before that which was born of the Virgin *Mary*, and consequently was the Son of God by an Ineffable and Eternal Generation.

To this may be added, that the Divinity of *Jesus Christ* is prov'd by the Divine Attributes which are ascrib'd to him in Scripture, and which cannot be ap-
ply'd

ply'd to any that is a mere Man; such as Omnipresence¹, Eternity, Immutability², Omniscience³, Omnipotence⁴, Majesty and Glory⁵; all which are Proofs of the Divine Nature of the Son of God.

S E C T. II.

Of the HOLY GHOST, the third Person of the Holy and Undivided Trinity.

God the
Holy Ghost.

The Divinity of the *Holy Ghost* is likewise as manifest from Scripture. True it is, that he is no where therein call'd God in exprefs Terms, tho some have infer'd it by way of Consequence: But yet the Divine Attributes are ascrib'd to him, as well as to the Son; as for instance, Omnipresence⁶, *Whither shall I go from thy Spirit? And whither shall I flee from thy Presence?* &c. *Know you not that ye are the Temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?* So likewise Eternity is attributed to him, because he is the Spirit which is in God, and which proceeds from God⁷, without which 'tis impossible that there should be any God. Omniscience is also attributed to him, when 'tis said, *The Spirit searcheth all things, yea the deep things of God: No Man knoweth the things of God, but the Spirit of God*⁸: Again, Omnipotence is ascrib'd to him, when he is said to be *the Finger of God, the Power of the most High, who disposes of his Gifts to every Man according as he will*⁹. Lastly, Majesty and Glory are apply'd to him, since we are commanded to be baptiz'd in his Name, as well as in that of the Father and the Son¹⁰, and the Blasphemy committed against him is said to be forgiven neither in this World nor in the World to come¹¹.

The Subor-
dination of
the three
Persons.

From what has been said we infer, that the Divine Essence is communicated to the Son and Holy Ghost

¹ Joh. 14. 13. Matt. 18. 20. & 28. 20. ² Heb. 1. 11, 12.
³ Joh. 21. 17. Joh. 2. 25. Rev. 2. 23. ⁴ Phil. 3. 21. ⁵ Joh.
5. 23. Rev. 5. 13. ⁶ Psal. 139. 7. ⁷ 1 Cor. 3. 16. & 6. 6.
⁸ 1 Cor. 2. 10. Joh. 15. 26. ⁹ 1 Cor. 2. 10, 11. ¹⁰ Luk. 11. 20.
¹¹ Ch. 1. 35. 1 Cor. 12. 11. ¹² Matt. 28. 19. ¹³ Matt. 12. 32.

tho 'tis as plain that there is some sort of Subordination between these three Persons, the Father having the Divine Nature from himself, whilst the Son and Holy Ghost derive it from the Father. And thus not only the Scriptures but the common Consent of Christians in all Ages, have establish'd this Order in the Persons of the Godhead, first the Father, secondly the Son, and thirdly the Holy Ghost.

But not to amuse the pious Reader with any of the Niceties which are rais'd usually about this Matter; we shall wave all, and conclude this Chapter with two practical Inferences drawn from the Doctrine of the Trinity, as reveal'd to us in Holy Writ. *Some practical Inferences.*

First, We may learn to acknowledg the transcendent Love of God towards us, who all along in Scripture is represented as giving his own Son, his only begotten Son to die for us. For this Love of God is infinitely enhanc'd, if his Son who dy'd for us, was not only begotten and born of the Virgin *Mary*, but was also his Son before all Ages, by an Eternal Generation.

Secondly, From the same Consideration we may learn to acknowledg the Dignity and Merits of our Saviour's Passion. For tho our Lord properly suffer'd in his Human Nature, yet it enhances the Dignity and Excellency thereof, to consider that this Son who suffer'd was before all Ages begotten of, and intimately united to God; and that whatever the Man Jesus Christ did and suffer'd, the Son of God in his Human Nature may very properly be said to suffer.

C H A P. VI.

Of the Divine Decrees.

HAVING in the preceding Chapters discours'd at large of the Divine Essence and Nature, and of the Persons in the Godhead to whom this Divine Nature does agree, we are to consider next the Divine Works, in order to come to a clear and full *The Works of God either Internal or External.*

full Apprehension of the Nature of God. These Works are commonly distinguish'd into such as are Internal and External. The former (of which we shall treat in this Chapter) are call'd the Decrees of God, which precede his External Works; since he does nothing but according to the Counsel or Purpose of his Will.

What words the Decree of God is express'd in scripture. The Decree of God in Scripture is express'd sometimes by the word *Βεβη*, or Counsel¹; sometimes *Προθεσις*, or Purpose²; at other times by the word *προορίζεν*, Fore-ordaining³ or Predestinating⁴; sometime by *Πρόγνωσις*, or *προγνώσκειν*, Foreknowledg, or foreknowing⁵; and lastly by the word *Εὐδονία*, or Good-Pleasure⁶.

The Decree of God defin'd. But to define it; the Divine Decree is a fix'd and immutable Purpose in the Mind of God, concerning whatsoever he is about to do, command or suffer to be done by his Free-will.

It is not God himself. And here it may be ask'd, whether the Decrees of God be God himself? A famous Question in Divinity, commonly maintain'd in the Affirmative by the Schoolmen, tho built upon no solid Reason. On the other hand there are several very strong Arguments to the contrary, as (1.) The Decrees are the free Effects of the Divine Will, as appears by the word *Βεβη*, or Counsel: Therefore the Decree is not a Divine Attribute, and a free Action which might have been otherwise, had God so pleas'd. (2.) The Decrees of God are manifold, not only different, but also contrary: By which we mean not that one Decree is contrary to another, so as to tend to the disannulling thereof, but that they are only of contrary Effects; such for instance is the Decree of Creating, and that other of Destroying the World. (3.) After they are executed, they are no longer Decrees; but God is always the same.

From these Arguments we may infer, notwithstanding all the Distinctions and subtle Reasonings of the Schools to the contrary, which we designedly pass by,

¹ Isa. 46. 10. Luke 7. 30. Eph. 1. 11. ² Rom. 8. 28.
³ 2 Tim. 1. 9. ⁴ Rom. 8. 29, 30. ⁵ Acts 2. 23. Rom. 8. 29.
⁶ 1 Pet. 1. 20. ⁷ Mat. 11. 26. Eph. 1. 5, 9.

as being Matter of more nice than useful Speculation) that the Decrees of God are not the very Divine Essence, but the free Volitions of God; which because they might or might not have been, and issue freely from God, are likewise really distinct from the Divine Essence.

But to give a more particular account of the Divine Decrees, we shall treat distinctly in as many Sections, First, of their Divisions: Secondly, of the Order: and Thirdly, of the Attributes of them.

S E C T. I.

The Divisions of the Decrees of God.

The Decrees of God are variously divided, but we shall only consider those Divisions of them which we omitted, *Ch. 4. Sect. 3.* in treating of the Divine Will, and which we refer'd to this Chapter.

In the first place then, the Decrees of God are divided with respect to the Objects: And here some relate to such things as God himself would do, as for instance, the Creation of the World, the sending of Jesus Christ into the World, the raising the Faithful from the Dead, &c. and others to such things as God would command or forbid; the former of which he would promote by the Assistance of his Grace, whilst he would permit the latter for very wise and just Reasons. However, this Assistance of God's Grace does not lay any constraint upon a Man to do what is good, but only bestows upon him a Power of Working; and is the very Principle of all Operation, without destroying Man's Free-will: Much less does the Divine Permission force a Man to sin.

From this Explication 'tis plain, in what sense the Decree of God is the Cause of things; viz. just after the same manner wherein he concurs in the Production of things. But here it may be objected, That the Divine Decree is the Idea or Conception of things, and is only distinguish'd by Reason from the Divine Essence: That those Ideas are not borrow'd from any thing without God, but the things are rather form'd

The several Divisions of the Divine Decrees.

1. With respect to the Objects.

In what sense the Decree of God is the Cause of things.

and express'd according to those Ideas, and are the Image of this Supreme Exemplar. For all things that are, were first in the Mind of God, before they had a real Existence.

An Objection
on answer-
ed.

To this we answer, That all things are indeed in the Mind of God, according as they happen in time; however he has by no means decreed that those things should exist, to the production of which he not only is unwilling to concur, but also forbids and detests. All things therefore with respect to their Essence are form'd according to the Idea of the Divine Decree, but not so with regard to their Existence: That is, God has decreed what should be the Essence of every thing when it exists, but he has not decreed concerning all things that they should exist. Thus God decreed to create Man, to give him a Law, and to bestow upon him sufficient Grace for the keeping of this Law; and all these exist according to the Idea of the Divine Decree. Moreover God decreed that Obedience to the Law should be accounted a Vertue, and the Transgression of it Sin, the One to be punish'd with Death, the Other to be crown'd with the Reward of Eternal Life. However it does not from hence follow that God has decreed the Existence of Sin, or that a Man who commits a Sin, to which he is predestinated by the Divine Decree, should be punish'd for it with Eternal Death. This would be to make God by his Decree the Author and Cause of Sin; whereas he has only decreed to prescribe a Law to Man, to bestow upon him sufficient Grace for the Observation of it, and to leave him at his Liberty of obeying or transgressing it; so that when he permits Sin, and will not hinder the Commission of it by the Intervention of his Omnipotence, Man abuses the Divine Grace and his own Free-will.

2. The
Divine De-
crees divi-
ded into
General
and Parti-
cular.

The second Division of the Divine Decrees is into such as are General and Particular. By the former he has appointed some general Laws concerning the Government of the World, the Salvation and Damnation of Man, in which all in general, or at least the greatest Part of Mankind are concern'd; such for instance is that wherein 'tis declar'd, *He that believes shall be saved, but he that believes not shall be damned.* The Particular Decree is that whereby God has appointed

to do so or so by such or such a Man, as his chusing *Aaron* for the Priesthood, *David* to be King, &c. These particular Decrees are for the most part no more than the Application of the general Decree made to him who performs the Condition annex'd to that Decree. Thus for instance the particular Decree is, *Peter* who believes shall be sav'd, but incredulous *Judas* shall be damn'd. Now this is nothing else but an Application of the general Decree, whereby God has decreed to save the Believers, and condemn the Unbelievers.

To what we have said it may be urg'd, That there are no Decrees of God but what are Particular, and that they by being compar'd together by the Abstraction of the Mind are call'd Universal or General. To this we reply, (1.) That we do not here speak of Logical or Metaphysical Universals, when the Mind by Abstractedness forms to it self an universal Conception or Idea drawn from Particulars, of which kind is the Apprehension of the Decree in general: but only of such Generals, which tho in their own Nature they are but one single Decree, yet have not one single and determinate Object, but by a general sort of Law extend to a great many Objects. (2.) Unless we suppose that there are such general Decrees, God could not be said to prescribe any Laws to Men; for if he had already made such singular and special Decrees concerning the Salvation and Damnation of all Men, as also concerning their Faith and Unbelief, as a Means of attaining Salvation, or being destin'd to Damnation, what Laws can he be said to prescribe to Men? There can be no Law given where all things are fix'd and determin'd before-hand. (3.) Nor could God exert his Judgment in rewarding the Pious and punishing the Impious; but only shew himself in the Execution of his Decrees: which would be to overthrow all the Method and Reason of the Divine Judgment. (4.) And lastly, tho there do sometimes occur singular Decrees of God with respect to some particular things, yet in the Case of Everlasting Salvation no mention is made of any special Decree, but what is an Application of the general Decree; unless it be as to the sending of Jesus Christ to be the Saviour of the World, of whom indeed

indeed 'tis peculiarly said, that *he was fore-ordain'd before the Foundation of the World*: As to others the Decrees run in the general; *He that believes and is baptiz'd, shall be sav'd; but he that believes not, shall be damn'd*. See likewise to the same purpose the following Texts, *Joh. 3. 16. Ch. 6. 39, 40. Acts 2. 21. Gal. 6. 7, 8, &c.*

3. Into
Absolute
and Condi-
tional.

The third and last Division of the Divine Decrees, is into such as are Absolute, and such as are Conditional. The former of these are such Decrees, the Execution whereof is not suspended by the performing of any stipulated Condition; of which nature, for instance, are the Decrees concerning the Creation of the World, the Mission of Christ, the Granting of Grace sufficient for the obeying of the Divine Call, the Last Judgment, and the like. The Conditional Decrees are such as have some Condition annex'd to them, by the Performance whereof the Execution of them is suspended. The Holy Scripture abounds with Instances of this nature, and among others you may for your private Satisfaction consult the following Texts, *Exod. 19. 5. 2 Chron. 15. 2. Is. 1. 19, 20. Jer. 18. 7, 8, 9, 10. Ezek. 18. 21, &c. Joh. 15. 14. Rom. 8. 13. Ch. 10. 9. 2 Tim. 2. 11, 12. Heb. 10. 38. Rev. 2. 5.*

Promises
and
Threat-
nings are
the Reve-
lation of
the Divine
Decrees.

To all these Places the Advocates of absolute Decrees do object, that these are not Decrees, but only Promises and Threats, by which is shewn what Connexion there is between Faith and Salvation, and between Infidelity and Damnation. *Answ.* (1.) Whether they be call'd Promises and Threats, or Decrees, it amounts to the same thing; for Promises and Threats are the Revelation of the Divine Decrees, by which God declares under what Conditions he has appointed Men as well to Salvation as Damnation: If then the one be Conditional, the other must be so too. (2.) Conditional Promises and Threatnings are inconsistent with an absolute Decree: for then God would offer Salvation to some under the Condition of believing, whom he had reprobated by his absolute Decree; and would threaten others with Death and Damnation upon the account of

Infidelity, whom by the same Decree he had elected to Salvation; neither of which are consistent with the Divine Veracity and Sincerity, but overthrow all Certainty of the Conditional Promises of God.

Again it may be objected, That the Reprobates may *An Objection* by Faith attain to Salvation, because there is a necessary Connexion between the one and the other. *Ans. swer'd.*

'Tis to be own'd, if they could believe, they might attain to Everlasting Salvation; but since, according to their own Opinion, Reprobates are precluded from believing by the absolute Decree of God, they cannot by Faith attain to Everlasting Salvation. This supposes, that God requires of his Creatures a Condition impossible to be perform'd by them, and therefore mocks and makes a sport with Men that are bound up by an absolute and irreverfible Decree from performing the Condition requir'd of them; than which nothing can be more unbecoming the Notion we have of God, as being an infinitely Juft, Holy, and Merciful Being.

Laftly, it may be faid, That God by Conditional Decrees is describ'd as being in fufpence, and waiting *Another Objection* what Man would do before he paffes an irrevocable Decree concerning it, which is abfurd. To this I reply, That God when he prefcribes a Law to Men under the Sanction of Rewards promis'd, and Punifhments threaten'd, does place himfelf in fufpence, expecting whether Man will obey the Law or not, before he decrees to him either Reward or Punifhment. And thus much he intimates of himfelf in Scripture; *I looked that it fhould bring forth Grapes, and it brought forth wild Grapes*¹. Again 'tis faid, that *the Long-fuffering of God waited in the Days of Noah*²: And again, *Behold I ftand at the Door, and knock*³. Now tho thefe Places are not to be underftood of Expectation or Waiting properly fo call'd, which is an uncertain Expectation of the Event, yet they evince that there is fomething in God analogous to fuch an Expectation; which could never be, unlefs God could be faid to fufpend his irrevocable Decree concerning a Man, whofe Obedience he waited for.

¹ If. 5. 2. ² 1 Pet. 3. 20. ³ Rev. 3. 20.

S E C T. II.

Of the Order of the Divine Decrees.

The Order of the Divine Decrees. As to the Order of the Divine Decrees, it depends chiefly on the Execution of them; and is to be consider'd with respect to the Priority and Posteriority of these Decrees: not that there is really any such thing, but only in our way of conceiving them. This Order is not to be taken from the natural Connexion of things, but from that Order of Causality, which one thing bears to another; the one being to be look'd upon as the Cause, the other as the Effect: and in this sense God decrees the former before he does the latter.

This we thought fit to observe in opposition to those Men who tell us, that God by one single Act of his Will has at once decreed all things, and that there is no *Prius* or *Posterior* in the Divine Decrees; for by this means there would be no Order but downright Confusion in the Decrees of God, as might be easily evinc'd.

An Objection answer'd.

To this Doctrine of ours it may be objected, That from hence it follows, that God did at first decree the End, which ought to be look'd upon as the Cause, and then the Means, which, with respect to the End, have the Nature of an Effect. To which I answer, 'tis true that God, who absolutely design'd the End, has likewise decreed that End before he did the Means which are subservient thereto. But, say they again, it does from thence follow, that the Decree of God, by which he wills the Salvation of Men, is prior to his foreseeing of their Faith and Obedience: and because this Decree cannot be prior, unless upon the account of its being the Cause, therefore the granting of Faith and Obedience, and the Foresight thereof, must be the Effect of that Cause.

Ans. The End may admit of a twofold Meaning, and may be consider'd, (1.) As an End absolutely intended, which in the Divine Decree does precede the Choice of the Means, and is the Cause why such or such Means are chosen as most proper for the attaining of that End. (2.) As an End consider'd as a Reward, which

which in the Divine Volition or Decree does not precede the Means, which are requir'd before-hand as the Condition of that Reward.

From this Order in the Divine Decrees between the End and the Means, we may easily apprehend what sort of Order they have with respect to other Objects. But we shall not insist any further on this nice Subject, but proceed to consider the Attributes of the Divine Decrees.

S E C T. III.

Of the Attributes of the Divine Decrees.

The Attributes of the Divine Decrees are various, among which some are pleas'd to place the Eternity of them. But as to this Attribute, it has been question'd, whether the Decrees of God be absolutely Eternal. As for our parts, we say, (1.) That we believe nothing to be Eternal but God only; and since we have already prov'd that the Decrees of God are not Essential to him, 'tis evident that they are not absolutely Eternal. (2.) The Divine Decrees are the free Effects of God's Will, and therefore must be posterior to it, since the Determination of the Free-will is necessary for their Production. (3.) Whatsoever is absolutely Eternal, is likewise absolutely necessary: If then the Decree of God be absolutely necessary, God himself, who does all things according to the Counsel of his Will, would be a necessary Agent; which would be to destroy all Religion. For from a necessary Agent it would be in vain for any Man to expect either a Reward for his Piety, or a Punishment for his Impiety; since whether he be worshipping or condemn'd, he could not act any otherwise than he does.

But to this an Objection lies; "If the Decrees of God are not Eternal, then God preceded his Decrees either in a Finite or Infinite Time; if in a Finite, then he is not infinite; if infinitely, then God could decree nothing, but after an infinite Space of Time." *An Objection on answer'd.*

Ans. (1.) This is a very trifling Objection, according to their own Opinion, because they themselves

own that there is no time in Eternity. But (2.) we confess that God, as he is a Being endued with Understanding and Will, cannot be without some Act of Decreeing *ab Infinito*. However it does not from thence follow, that what God has decreed with respect to his Creatures, was so decreed from all Eternity. *Francis Gomarus**, in his ninth Dissertation concerning the Eternal Decree of God, has very fairly stated this Question; and proves, because the Decree of God is not God himself, that therefore there is a manifest Distinction between the Eternity of God and of his Decree.

The Objection drawn from several Places of Scripture answered. To this they add several Places of Scripture, to prove their Assertion of the Eternity of the Divine Decrees: as Acts 15. 18. *Known unto God are all his Works from the Beginning of the World.* 1 Cor. 2. 7. The Wisdom of the Gospel is said to have been *ordain'd by God before the World unto our Glory.* Eph. 1. 4. *He hath chosen us in Jesus Christ before the Foundation of the World.* 1 Tim. 1. 9. Who hath sav'd us, &c. according to his own Purpose and Grace, *which was given us in Christ Jesus before the World began.* *Answ.* (1.) As to the first of these Places, it relates to the Calling of the Gentiles, which St. James from *Amos* 9. 11, 12. proves to have been decreed by God several Ages before. But (2.) As to all those Texts in general we say, that what was before the Creation of the World, was not therefore absolutely Eternal; since the Angels, who by the Confession of many Divines and Fathers, were created before this Visible World, had a Beginning, and consequently were not from all Eternity.

1. Wisdom. This Attribute then of the Eternity of God's Decrees being for the foregoing Reasons laid aside, the first, according to our Opinion, is the Wisdom of them, according to that of the Apostle, *O the Depth of*

* Nam ut Dei Existentia, sic Æternitas ejusdem absolutè necessaria est. Contra verò, ut Decreti Existentia à causa, liberrimè agente, dependet; sic ejusdem Æternitas merè arbitraria est, ut quæ sic est, ut non esse potuerit; ideoque Decretum non *συνωνύμως*, seu eadem prorsus ratione qua Deus, sed *ἀναλόγως* æternum appellatur.

the Riches, both of the Wisdom and Knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his Judgments, and his Ways past finding out! for who hath known the Mind of the Lord, or who hath been his Counsellor? Whatsoever then is repugnant to the Divine Wisdom, ought not to be attributed to God.

Another Attribute of the Divine Decrees is Liberty, ^{2. Liberty} from whence the Decree of God is stiled *'Eudoxia*, Good-pleasure², as depending solely upon the Good-will of God. But of this we have already treated in *Section 3. Ch. 4.* concerning the Will of God.

The third is the Amplitude or Extent of the Divine ^{3. Extent} Decrees, since nothing happens in the World, but what God has decreed.

The fourth Attribute is Immutability, according to ^{4. Immutability} that of *Isaiah*³ and *Malachi*⁴; which is chiefly applicable to the General Decrees of God, which can never be alter'd or disannul'd. Whereas the Particular Decrees, which are for the most part an Application of the Universal, are so often alter'd as there is a Change made in Men to whom the General Decree is applied. And this Alteration is not on God's but on Man's part; so that the Purpose of God standeth sure and fix'd.

C H A P. VII.

Of the Divine Work of Creation.

Hitherto we have discoursed of the Decrees of God, which are his Internal Operations, and shall in this Chapter and the next treat of his External Works, which are Creation and Providence. The due Apprehension of these, will inform us of the Right that God has of exacting from us what sort of Worship he pleases.

To begin with his Work of *Creation*, design'd to

¹ Rom. 11. 33, 34. ² Matt. 11. 26. Eph. 1. 5, 9. ³ Isa. 46. 10. & 55. 10, 11. ⁴ Mal. 3. 6.

be the subject matter of this Chapter, wherein we shall in several distinct Sections treat, First, of Creation in general: Secondly, of the Creation of Angels: Thirdly, of the Creation of the Visible World: Fourthly, of the Creation of Man, and herein of his Understanding and Will, and in what sense he may be said to be the Image of God.

S E C T. I.

Of Creation in General.

Creation
in gene-

Moses in the first Chapter of *Genesis* gives us such an exact account of the Creation, as is to be met with no where else. This Creation we distinguish into the first and secondary Creation. The first is the Production of all things out of Nothing: Such as the highest Heavens and its Inhabitants the Angels, and that rude and undigested Matter, out of which this Visible World was afterwards fram'd. And this Creation we believe to be describ'd by these Words, *In the Beginning God created the Heaven and the Earth*: Where by *Heaven* we do not understand that Visible Firmament in which the Stars are plac'd, but the highest or third Heaven, invisible to us, and wherein God resides: And by *Earth* is to be understood that void Mass without Form, out of which this Visible World was made.

We are likewise of opinion that this Creation was a long time before the second; which we infer from the Words, *In the Beginning*, which seem to point out to us the Time when God began to make Something without himself, when that which was produc'd began to exist, and before which there was no Created Being.

World
made out
Nothing.

From what has been said may easily be solv'd that Question, whether the Creation was made out of Nothing; viz. by this Distinction of the first and second Creation. The latter we say was produc'd out of some pre-existing Matter, but the former out of Nothing. True it is, the Word *create* by Divines is us'd to denote the Production of Something out of Nothing, tho the Word *ברא* *Barah* in Scripture signifies only a Produc-

tion

tion out of some pre-existent Matter, or else a performing of some miraculous Works', or lastly a producing of new Qualities¹.

However, since the Word *Creation* is us'd among Divines to denote the Production of Something out of Nothing, we shall readily comply with that Usage, since the Nature of the thing requires, that we should say that the first Mass without Form was created out of Nothing. This will appear if we consider, (1.) That nothing can be coeternal with God. (2.) That if that first Matter out of which the visible World was made, was uncreated and coeternal with God, then God could have no Right over it of altering and disposing of it as he thinks best. (3.) That he had no Power of changing, since, if it were Eternal, it would be immutable and independent.

To this 'tis usually objected, That out of Nothing Nothing can be produc'd. *Ans.* 'Tis true indeed, this cannot be effected naturally, because every natural Cause being of a finite Efficacy, does pre-require some Subject on which to work, and which it may alter: But God, who is endu'd with infinite Power, might prepare for himself some matter to work upon, so that Something might exist out of Nothing. *An Objec- tion an- swer'd.*

But 'tis urg'd by some to the contrary, That Something and Nothing are so different from one another, that the bare supposing of the one is a destroying of the other; and are such distant Extremes, that they can never be united together. *In what sense Something and Nothing are infinitely distant.* *Ans.* There is no Consequence to be deduc'd from this way of arguing: The saying that Something and Nothing are infinitely distant from one another, requires a nice Explication. For if the Sense be, that there is an absolute Contradiction between Something and Nothing, so that both of them cannot be predicated together of one and the same Subject, but by affirming the one, the other is necessarily deny'd; the Proposition is true, since Nothing cannot at the same time be Something, nor can that which is Something be at the same time Nothing: This is what

¹ Exod. 34. 10. Num. 16. 30. Is. 45. 7. ² Ps. 51. 12. Is. 65. 17.

the Schools call *Contradictio in Terminis*. But if the Meaning is, that there is such an infinite Distance betwixt Something and Nothing, so as to be conceiv'd as two positive Extremes, between which there is so infinite a Distance as cannot be surmounted by an infinite Power; then this Position is apparently false.

But not to amuse our Reader with such unprofitable Speculations; 'tis enough to observe, That the Universe was at first created out of nothing; That God was the efficient Cause thereof, since to him alone the Creation of the World is attributed in Scripture¹, and therein he demonstrated his infinite Power: And that this Creation was effected by the Word of God, it being frequently said, *Let there be Light, and there was Light; let there be a Firmament, and there was a Firmament*², &c. *By the Word of the Lord were the Heavens made, and all the Host of them by the Breath of his Mouth*³. *He spake and they were made, he commanded, and they were created*⁴. Thro Faith we understand that the Worlds were fram'd by the Word of God⁵. Nor are we to suppose that only this lower Region, the visible World, (where, besides Men and other Creatures, are plac'd those glorious Orbs of Light, the Sun, Moon, and Stars) was created by the Word of God; but also the Empyrean or Highest Heaven, the Throne of his Majesty and Glory, and the Habitation of the Angels and of the Spirits of Men made perfect, was created by him: So that Heaven is not, as some affirm, Eternal, and Uncreated.

S E C T. II.

Of the Creation of Angels.

^eangels
that. God having created the Empyrean or Highest Heaven, he likewise created the Angels to be the Inhabitants thereof. By Angels, according to the common Acceptation of Scripture, we are to understand those

¹ Gen. 1. 1. Ps. 134. 8. Acts 4. 24. Jer. 10. 11. ² Gen. 1. 5. Ps. 33. 6. ³ Ps. 148. 5. ⁴ Heb. 11. 3.

Spiritual and Immaterial Creatures, to whom God has assign'd Heaven for their proper Habitation; being call'd Angels not upon the account of their Nature, but of their Office, as being Messengers of the most High.

That there are such Beings is beyond all Dispute, if *That t* we will believe what the Scripture says of their fre- *really e*quent appearing to the Patriarchs and Holy Men of old. To deny them their Existence, is not only Sadducism, but one Degree of Atheism. For to say that there are no such Beings because they are not visible, would be a fair Step towards the denying the Being of God, because he is invisible.

Tho the Scripture does not in exprefs Terms say that *Were cr* the Angels were created by God, yet in some Places *ted by C* there are broad Hints of such a thing'. However, Reason tells us it must be so. For if the Angels were not created by God, they would have been self-existent, equal with God, independent upon him, and could never by any Right be subject to him; all which is contrary to the Oeconomy of the Divine Hierarchy, wherein the Angels are subject to God, being his ministring Spirits sent forth by him as he pleases, and to whom and for whatsoever Purposes he thinks fit.

As to the time wherein God created the Angels, *When z* since the Scripture is silent, the Learned are of various *were c* Opinions about it. But the most probable Opinion is, *ted.* That they were created long before this visible World; which is chiefly ground'd upon this Argument, *viz.* That the Devil immediately after the Creation is said to have deceiv'd our first Parents: From whence 'tis plain, that then there were evil Angels who had revolted from God, and were cast out of Heaven, and destin'd to Destruction for their Rebellion. But 'tis not at all likely that those Celestial Spirits should immediately after they were created revolt from God, since not only one, but many Angels, were concern'd in that Rebellion; which consisted not in one single Act of Sin, but in a long Perseverance therein.

As to their Substance, they are in Scripture stil'd *Spi- They ar* *rits, i. e.* of an Immaterial Substance, without cor- *Spirits.*

† Psal. 148. 2, 5. Job 1. 6. & 2. 1. & 38. 7.

poreal Bulk of Composition, and such as can penetrate the most solid Bodies, and may, tho many, cohabit in one and the same human Body.

Upon the account of this *Spirituality* of their Essence, several Attributes belong to them: Such as (1.) *Immortality*, according to what is said by St. Luke, Ch. 20. 36. *Neither can they die any more, for they are equal to the Angels.* However, this Immortality is inferiour to what is in God: for tho they have no internal Principle of Corruption within themselves, yet they may easily be destroy'd by God their Creator. (2.) *Understanding or Knowledg*, without which 'tis not to be suppos'd that any Spiritual Being could exist. This Knowledg again is inferiour to the Knowledg of God, since they are ignorant of the last Day of Judgment, of the Thoughts of Men, and of future Events; the Knowledg of which is the peculiar Attribute of God. (3.) *Free-will*, without which it would be to no purpose for them to be endu'd with Understanding. (4.) *Great Power*, which in Holy Writ is ascrib'd to them by the many wonderful Works which they did, such for instance, as the destroying of all the First-born among the *Egyptians* in one Night, cutting off the Army of *Sennacherib*, &c. (5.) *Agility*, which is a peculiar Property belonging to their Spiritual Nature, and which appears by their sudden Apparitions, whereby in a moment they descend down to us from Heaven, and deliver us the Messages which they bring from God: As also by what has been done by the Ministry of only one Angel in a very short time, as in the Case of the First-born of the *Egyptians*, and the Army of *Sennacherib*. (6.) As to their Number, 'tis describ'd in Scripture as very great and innumerable¹.

The Angels are either Good or Bad: The former have persever'd in Righteousness, and preserv'd their Innocence; from whence they are call'd Holy and Elect Angels, and Angels of Light. The bad Angels revolted from God, and deviated from their first Original under that Arch-traitor the Devil, whose Angels they are call'd, *Matt.* 25. 41. and therefore they are stil'd

¹ Dan. 7. 10. Rev. 5. 11. Heb. 12. 22. Jude v. 14. Psal. 68. 18.

unclean and evil Spirits. What their Sin was, is not manifest, tho many are of Opinion that it was Pride; however by the Punishment inflicted on them, without any hopes of redress, it appears that their Sin was very great, and probably not one single Act, but a continued Series of Rebellion.

'Tis ask'd with respect to the bad Angels, whether their Will be so far determin'd to what is Evil, that it is impossible for them to will or do any thing that is Good? To this we answer, That there is no question to be made, but that evil Angels are very much harden'd in Evil, and meditate upon nothing else, being the Authors of Mens sinning, and consequently will not perform any thing that is good: But whether they be deprived of all Power of doing Good, is hard to determine, since the Scripture says nothing about it. The only Reason then why we think them to be harden'd in Sin, is because they despair of Pardon, and know themselves to be appointed to Everlasting Destruction by a just and irreversible Decree; and this will be the State of the Damn'd in the other World, wherein they will have no Glimpse or Rays of Hope of being pardon'd.

*Whether
be impossi-
ble for th
bad Ange
to do any
thing that
is Good.*

There are doubtless some Orders or Degrees both of good and bad Angels; but what they are, is not so easily decided: And 'tis Rashness and Presumption to determine any thing about it, any farther than the Scripture allows of. Without then insisting upon this nice Enquiry, we shall in the sequel of this Section set down the various Offices of the good, as also the Operations of the bad Angels.

As to the Good, they being ministring Spirits, are appointed by God to several Offices: Such as (1.) To celebrate the Praises of God, before whose Presence they stand continually; and this is their ordinary Employment in Heaven. But then sometimes upon extraordinary Occasions, when God by the performance of some signal Work shews his Glory before Men, the Angels celebrate his Praise in the Presence of Men, as in that Angelical Hymn sung before the Shepherds at our Saviour's Birth'. (2.) They were appointed to

*The sever-
al Offices
assign'd to
the good
Angels.*

do several Offices for our Saviour Jesus Christ¹. (3.) To announce the Commands of God to Men, and this either to a whole People, as was the promulging of the Law to the *Israelites*²; or else to some one or few Persons³. (4.) To execute the Commands of God with Power, and that several ways, either by preserving the Faithful and Pious from falling into Dangers⁴; or by delivering them out of them⁵; or by correcting the People of God for some Fault, such as *Zachariah's* Infidelity⁶, or punishing them more grievously for a greater Crime, as *David* for Ambition⁷; or by executing Judgments against the Wicked⁸; or by conveying the Souls of the deceas'd Faithful into a State of Rest and Happiness⁹; or lastly by summoning at the End of the World all the Faithful from one End of the Heaven unto the other¹⁰.

No Guardian Angel appointed to Man at his Birth.

But here it may be ask'd whether every Man at his Birth has his particular Angel assign'd to him, who is always present with, and takes care of him? The *Romanists* maintain that there are such Guardian Angels, and upon that account say, that every Man may apply himself to his own Guardian Angel in all Straits and Necessities, with a full Assurance of being heard by him. But we *Protestants* maintain the contrary, and that upon these two Accounts: (1.) Because tho the Scripture does make mention of some Angels taking care of particular People and Countries, yet it no where as-

¹ Matt. 4. 11. Luk. 22. 43. Joh. 1. 51. ² Acts 7. 28, 53. Gal. 3. 19. Heb. 2. 2. ³ As to Abraham, Gen. 18. To Lot, Gen. 19. To the Parents of Sampson, Judg. 3. To Gideon, Judg. 6. 12. To Daniel, Ch. 8, &c. To Zachariah, Luk. 1. 11. To the Virgin Mary, V. 28. To Joseph, Matt. 1. 20. Ch. 2. 13, 19. To the Shepherds, Luk. 2. 9. To the Women who visited our Lord's Sepulcher, Matt. 28. 5. To the Apostles after our Lord's Ascension, Acts 1. 10, 11. ⁴ Ps. 91. 11, 12. ⁵ Ps. 34. 8. of which there are Instances in Lot, Gen. 19. Jacob, Gen. 32. 1, 2. Elijah, 1 Kings 19. 5. Elisha, 2 Kings 6. 16. The three Children out of the fiery Furnace, Dan. 3. Daniel out of the Lions Den, Ch. 6. And Peter out of Prison, Acts 12. 7, &c. ⁶ Luk. 1. 20. ⁷ 2 Sam. 24. 15, 16. ⁸ Gen. 19. Exod. 12. 29, &c. 2 Kings 19. 35. Acts 12. 23. ⁹ Luk. 16. 22. ¹⁰ Matt. 24. 31. 1 Theff. 4. 16.

signs a Guardian Angel to every individual Man. (2.) Because we are directed to offer up our Petitions to God only in and through the Mediation of one Mediator betwixt God and Man, *viz.* the Man Christ Jesus. So that we may very fairly conclude that the Worship of Angels, as practis'd in the *Romish Church*, is Superstitious and Idolatrous.

As to the Evil Angels, they set themselves in opposition to the Glory of God, and the Salvation of Mankind; and hence their Prince or Leader is stil'd in Scripture, *Satan*, the *Devil*, our *Adversary*, and an *Accuser of the Brethren*. To this end the Devil has erected a sort of Kingdom of Darkness, wherein he as Head presides, and has a powerful Dominion over the Ungodly. However this his Kingdom is subject to the Sovereign Power of God; and how great soever the Authority of the Unclean Spirits may be, yet they are restrain'd within certain Bounds, beyond which they cannot exert their Power unless by the Permission of the Divine Providence. But sometimes God gives them a greater Liberty than ordinary, either to punish the Wicked, as was the Case of *Saul*¹, of *Ahab*², and of those who were deliver'd up to Satan for the punishment of the Flesh³; or to prove and exercise the Righteous, as was the Case of *Job*⁴, and the Church of *Smyrna*⁵; or else to preserve them from Sin, as *St. Paul* had the Messenger of Satan sent to buffet him, that he might not be exalted above measure through the Abundance of Revelations that were given him⁶.

The Evil Angels Enemies to Mens Salvation.

But the chief Power which they have over Men by the Divine Permission, is to tempt and incite them to Sin. From hence the Devil is said in Scripture to walk about like a roaring Lion, seeking whom he may devour, and is expressly stiled *the Tempter*. However, the whole of their Temptation consists in seducing Men; for they cannot force the Will of Man to what is evil. They only lay such Motives before him, as to excite him to Sin, which he has Power of resisting, especially by the Assistance of the Grace of God.

They tempt Men to Sin.

¹ 1 Sam. 16. 14. ² 1 Kings 22. 20, &c. ³ 1 Cor. 5. 5. ⁴ Job 1, & 2. ⁵ Rev. 2. 10. ⁶ 2 Cor. 12. 7.

various
methods.

Various are the Methods by which they tempt Men, which they apply in such a manner as they suppose to be most prevalent. Sometimes they appear and offer to a Man such things as they think to be most efficacious for seducing him. Sometimes they make use of Instruments to persuade Men, and thus was *Eve* tempted under the shape of a Serpent : But the chiefest Instruments the Devil makes use of, are evil Men ; and in the imploying of them in his malicious Designs, does more especially appear his Power, as being Prince of Darkeness. For by thus working in the Children of Disobedience, he manifests his Enmity with God, in endeavouring to destroy what God had made. Hence is he sometimes said to be transform'd into an Angel of Light, to have his false Prophets, shewing lying Signs and Wonders, in order to deceive, if it were possible, the very Elect. At other times he infuses loose and profane Ideas into Mens Minds in their Dreams ; nay, and when they are awake, he suggests wicked Thoughts into them, by disturbing their Animal Spirits, and working upon their Imagination. But after all, the Devil cannot be said to force Men by a fatal Necessity to sin, he can only tempt and lay such Inducements before them as he thinks proper to attain his End ; but then they may resist his Motions, and surmount all the Temptations of the Devil, especially when assisted by the Grace of God. And to this purpose we are admonish'd in Scripture to put on the whole Armour of God, that we may be able to withstand the Wiles of the Devil ¹ ; to resist the Devil, and he shall flee from us ² ; and to be sober and vigilant, since our Adversary the Devil walketh about like a roaring Lion, seeking whom he may devour ; therefore we are to resist him, being strong in Faith ³.

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Add to this, that sometimes they invade the Bodies of Men, afflicting them with various Distempers and Pains, of which there are several Instances in the Gospel. But of those Demoniacs there are two sorts ; some perceive themselves to be possess'd by Devils at Intervals and by Fits, whilst others are constantly

¹ Eph. 6. 11. ² Jam. 4. 7. ³ 1-Pet. 5. 8.

tormented, and find no intermission in their Distempers. However, since all their Power is only natural, they can hurt Men only by natural Means. That there have been Men possess'd with Devils, is apparent to all who believe any thing of Sacred Writ; since therein mention is made of such Persons, and of their miraculous Cure by our Saviour's casting out of the Devils that possess'd them. So that after such plain Conviction a Man must be a *Sadducee* or an Atheist, who will deny that there are such evil Spirits, as have by the Divine Permission often had an Influence over the Bodies, and sometimes over the Minds of Men.

But here it may be ask'd, whether there are at present among Christians *Demoniacks*, or Persons possess'd with the Devil? To this we answer, That 'tis hardly credible; or if there be any such, the Instances of them are very rare; since the Power of the Devil is very much weaken'd by the Gospel. When Christianity began first to be preach'd, there were a great many *Demoniacks*; which was so order'd by the wise Direction of God, for the Demonstration of the Glory of Jesus Christ, who cast them out at a word's speaking with an Air of Authority: As also for the Confirmation of the Divinity of the Gospel that was preach'd. But now they that are said to be possess'd among Christians, are for the most part suborn'd by Impostors to serve a turn. Of this there are too many Instances among the *Romanists*, witness the famous Story of *Fetzer*, and the Boy of *Bilson*; both which Cheats, with several others of the like nature, have been detected, and found to be only a trick of the Popish Priests for the magnifying of their Exorcisms, and their pretended working of Miracles. After all, we do not deny but there are some *Demoniacks* among the Infidels of *India*, *China*, and *America*; since 'tis confirm'd by the Testimony of several Travellers, and the Devil does still maintain his Kingdom of Darkness in those Parts. And we make no question but that Christians for the Confirmation of their whole Religion in general, tho not of any doctrinal Points in particular, which are still in dispute, may have a Power of casting out Devils.

Whether there are any possess'd with the Devil at present

to
such. It may farther be ask'd, by what Tokens or Signs we know that any one is possess'd? And here some require that the possess'd Persons should speak in unknown and foreign Tongues; foretel things to come, with the like: but we read of no such matter in Scripture concerning Demoniacks. Others again suppose it to be a sufficient Sign, if some things extraordinary happen in Distempers, of which the most able Physicians can give no very good account. But because this may deceive Men, 'tis better to be cautious, and to determine nothing positively upon this Point.

Lastly it may be ask'd, whether the Devils who possess the Body of a Man, may be cast out by the Devil by way of Collusion? To this we reply, by no means; since they do not take possession of a Man at their pleasure, but only by the Command of God, as Executioners of his Judgments: Therefore they cannot depart thence without a Divine Power. Unless this be suppos'd, all the Miracles of our Saviour would be render'd suspected, and we should confirm the *Jews* in their Blasphemy and Unbelief.

S E C T. III.

Of the Creation of this Visible World.

ne Re- That this Visible World was not from all Eternity, ks on is plain by the account which *Moses*, *Gen. 1.* gives us of its being created. This Creation was perform'd in the Space of six Days, according to what that Divine Writer relates, who assigns a particular Work to each Day. According to his Account of the Creation we may observe, That God did not form all things together at one and the same Instant; for then, (1.) *Moses* could not have said that all things were created in six Days. (2.) Nor could there any Reason be assign'd why *Moses* observ'd that Order in his History of the Creation, viz. That God on the first Day created the Light, on the second the Firmament, on the third the Earth, &c. For it cannot be said that *Moses* had any regard to the natural Dependency of things, or plac'd the Cause first, and the Effect afterwards: For then he would first of all have describ'd the Creation

ation of the Sun before he did that of Light, since we see that Light depends upon the Sun as its Cause. Nor (3.) and lastly, could there any reason be given of that Divine Precept, which enjoins the Sanctification of the Sabbath, upon the account that in Six Days God created the World, and rested on the Seventh.

However, we do not suppose that God spent six whole Days in the Creation, but only one moment of each Day on its proper Work: For God stands not in need of Time to compleat his Operations, since he can effect all things by one single Word. But according to his infinite Wisdom he so dispos'd it, as to create all things at several Intervals of Time.

He began with the Formation of Light, that so all *The Wor* things that were before in Darkn^{ess} might be conspi- *of the fi* cious, and the Glory of the future Creation might be *Day, Lig* the more illustrious. This Light was not a mere Quality, but a lucid Substance, out of which 'tis probable God afterwards form'd the Sun and the rest of the Stars. This Light thus created, and not reduc'd to any certain Form, seems to have enlighten'd sometimes one, sometimes another Part of the Earth, and by this means made a distinction betwixt Day and Night.

On the second Day God created the Firmament, or *Of the s* rather the Expansion, for so the *Hebrew* Word imports: *cond, the* by which we understand all that vast extended Space, *Firmame* which commonly is call'd Heaven, wherein the Birds fly, the Clouds move, and the Stars shine. This reaches up to that spangled Roof which serves as a Veil or Curtain to keep the highest Heaven from our View. But whether this visible Expansion be of a round or square Form, we shall not pretend to determine, leaving it to the nice Enquiry of Astronomers and Philosophers.

The Heaven being made, on the third Day God cre- *Of the* ated the Earth; that is, he gather'd the Waters into *third, th* one Place, separating them from the dry Land, calling *Earth.* the one Earth, proper for the Habitation of Men and Beasts, and the other he stil'd Sea. On the same day did the Earth bring forth Grass, and Trees with their Fruit and Seed, proper for the propagation of each individual Tree and Herb.

On the fourth Day God created the Luminaries of the Heaven, the Sun, Moon and Stars; that is, he collected the Light which was created on the first Day, and cast it into certain Orbs; of which there are two great Lights (stil'd so with respect to us) viz. The Sun to rule the Day, and the Moon to rule the Night. All these Lights were made, not only to distinguish the Day from the Night, but to be for Signs, and for Seasons; that is, either to mark out to us the various Seasons of the Year, such as Spring, Summer, Autumn and Winter; or else to inform us of the New-Moons and Sabbaths, which depend upon the Motion of the Sun and Moon. As to the Astrologers Notion of the Influence of the Stars over the Bodies and Actions of Men, 'tis to be detested and rejected as Superstitious and Impious.

On the fifth Day God created the Fish and the Fowl, which had Life, the one to move in the Water, and the other to fly in the open Air: And what is peculiar to this Day's work is, that here is the first mention of God's blessing his Creatures, bidding them to be fruitful and multiply; that is, he gave them a prolifick Virtue, and a natural Instinct for Generation, whereby they might not only preserve their Species, but also multiply their Individuals.

On the sixth and last Day God created the terrestrial Animals, and at last Man, of whom we shall treat distinctly hereafter. As to the other Creatures, *Moses* distinguishes them into three sorts, viz. (1.) Beasts, by which we understand the wild and savage Creatures, such as Lions, Bears, Wolves, &c. which tho from the very beginning fierce in their Nature, yet did not exercise their Rage, till after the Fall of Man. (2.) Cattel, which are properly Creatures design'd for the Use of Man, being tame and kept at home, such as Oxen, Sheep, Horses, &c. (3.) Creeping Things, such as Serpents, Worms, and other Insects.

These are the Works of the six Days Creation, which when God had consider'd and reflected upon, he pronounc'd them to be *Good*, yea *very Good*. But after our first Parents transgressing the Command of God in eating of the forbidden Fruit, then this Paradi-
saical Scene of things was chang'd. The Earth brought forth hurtful and venomous Herbs, and the wild Beasts
were

were let loose to prey upon one another, and to devour their Lord and Master M A N. In a word, the whole Frame of Nature alter'd its Course, and God made his Creatures his Weapon for the Revenge of his Enemies, and the World fought with him against the Unwise.

S E C T. IV.

Of the Creation of Man.

The Earth being created, and all the several Species *The Creation of* of Plants and Animals, it pleased God at last to create Man, as the Master-piece of all his other Works, *Man.* and for whose sake all the rest were made. In the Creation of Man there is this remarkable, That when God was about to make him, he did not barely say, Let Man be made, as in the former days, Let there be Light, Let there be a Firmament, &c. but as if he call'd a Council and debated on this Workmanship, we read, *Let Us make Man.* Not that he had need of any Council or Deliberation for the Creating of Man, or that here was any Consult properly so call'd, either between the Persons of the Holy Trinity, or between God and the Angels, as some have imagin'd : But 'tis to denote the Excellency of the Work which he was going to do, so far surpassing all the rest of his Creatures.

Now in this Creation we must distinctly consider *The Creation of* the Formation of the Body, and then that of the Soul *Human* of Man. God form'd his Body out of the Dust of the *dy, with* Earth, as it is *Excellen* *Gen. 2. 7.* from whence the first Man is said to be of the Earth earthy. But God form'd the Woman's Body out of one of the Man's Ribs, that she might be his inseparable Companion, and be belov'd by him, as being his own Body, Flesh of his Flesh, and Bone of his Bone. The Excellency of the Human Body consists in these Particulars. (1.) In its being made in an erect or upright Form, so that Man can look towards Heaven, to behold his Creator ; whereas all the other Creatures look downwards towards the Earth. (2.) In its Beauty, and the Symmetry of all its Members, fitted as it were to be the Organ of the Soul, whereby

he can perform all her Functions. Add to this, that the whole Structure of Man is so contriv'd and compacted together, that if any one should pretend to displace, take away, or add any Member, he would not only deface the Beauty of the Fabrick, but also render it less serviceable to the Soul. (3.) In that the Organs of Sense, by which the Soul receives its Notices of, and can pass a Judgment on external Objects, and by which it is capable of Pleasure or Pain, are so framed as to render Man a proper Subject of God's prescribing a Law to him, and of exacting his Obedience to it.

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Into the Body thus form'd out of the Earth, God breath'd a Living Soul. What this Divine Breathing signifies, cannot be easily explain'd; but this is certain, that it denotes an immediate Production, whereby God created the Soul, and united it to the Body which he had made. From hence we may very justly infer, that the Soul was not the Product of the Constitution of the Body, and will not perish with it, but will survive when that is dead and committed to the Grave. This Immortality of the Soul is sufficiently evinc'd by Scripture, wherein it is call'd the Breath of Life¹, *i. e.* a Living Soul: Again 'tis said, that Men may kill the Body, but cannot destroy the Soul²; and again, the Spirits of Men are said to return to God who gave them³. All which Places, and more that might be produc'd, do evidently prove that the Soul of Man is immortal. But 'tis not only Scripture, but Reason likewise confirms this Truth; for we might shew from the Immateriality of the Soul, and its Independency on the Body, that it is immortal.

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Nor is it less evident, both from Scripture and the Nature of the Soul, that it performs its own Operations even without the Body. As to Scripture, we have that memorable Passage of St. Paul, 2 Cor. 12. 2. where speaking of himself he says, *I knew a Man (whether in the Body, I cannot tell, or whether out of the Body, I cannot tell, God knoweth) such an one caught up to the third Heavens.* From hence we may rationally conclude, that if the Apostle knew not whether

¹ Gen. 2. 7. ² Mat. 10. 28. Luke 12. 4, 5. ³ Eccles. 12. 7.

in or out of the Body he was caught up into Heaven, he was of opinion that the Spirit did not only subsist without the Body, but perform'd those Functions that are peculiar to it self, that is, could think upon and have a clear Knowledge of the Revelations of God. For had he not believ'd so, he would certainly have known, that this Revelation was made to him, not out of, but in his Body. The same thing seems to be evinc'd by the Parable of the rich Glutton and *Lazarus*: For the Discourses which are said to pass betwixt them after their Death, cannot be ascrib'd to them, unless we suppose that the Soul after Death can think and perform its vital Functions. As to the Nature of the Soul, this seems likewise to require as much. For it cannot be conceiv'd how the Soul, whose principal Act is to think, can subsist without thinking: especially since in this World we find that the Soul does not make use of the Body as an Instrument to promote Thought; on the contrary, when she proposes to think seriously and to any purpose, she abstracts her self from the Body and all things belonging to it as far as possible, so as not to regard or mind any thing without it self. And why then should she not be able, after her Separation from the Body, to think and perform those Functions which are peculiar to her Nature?

S E C T. V.

Of the Understanding and Will of Man.

In a human Soul there are two Faculties, or rather *Under-*essential Acts, the Understanding and the Will. The *standing* common Opinion is, that these two Faculties or Powers *and Will*, are really distinct from the Soul, and from one ano- *not two* ther; but the Weakness of this will appear by the fol- *Faculties* lowing Argument. If there be two such Powers in the *distinct* Soul really distinct from each other, then we must sup- *from the* pose that one of them can only understand and judg- *Soul*, but will nothing; and that the other can understand and judg of nothing, but only will or not will. Now if this were so, then it will follow, either that the Will would be carry'd out to every Object by a brutal

tal Impulse, without the least Choice or Advice; or else would be necessarily determin'd to will or not will by the ultimate Judgment of the Understanding: both which are very absurd. Since the former destroys the Nature of Vertue and Vice, which consists in chusing what is agreeable, and rejecting what is repugnant to Reason: and the latter renders the Action of the Will necessary, since it cannot but be determin'd to what the Understanding dictates; and by this means is destroy'd all making of Laws, all the Reason of Vertue and Vice, and consequently that of Rewards and Punishments.

The Soul understands and wills immediately of it self.

The Soul then does immediately by it self, without any intervening Powers flowing from and distinct from it, both understand and will. And because it acts after different manners about one and the same thing, hence it is that according to our way of conceiving things, there are several Powers attributed to it: When it understands and judges of a thing, 'tis call'd Understanding; and when it is inclin'd to any Object, it is call'd Will. And tho Understanding and Will be but Acts of the Soul, yet because the Soul does not always actually will or understand, and sometimes applies its Understanding or Will to this, sometimes to that Object, and has a Power of suspending this its Action, and directing it to some other thing, therefore from hence it is that they are consider'd as two Powers or Faculties. But to treat of them more particularly and distinctly.

Understanding, its Act, as 'tis an Act of the pure Intellect, is necessary.

The Understanding is that Act of the Soul which apprehends and judges of any Object under the Notion of a Being, that is either true or good. And this Act, as 'tis an Act of the pure Intellect, is evidently natural and necessary, and apprehends more or less clearly any Object, as it bears more or less proportion to it. This is evident in all the Actions that are observable in the Understanding, as (1.) in the simple Apprehension: When once an Object is propos'd to the Understanding that is adequate to it, it necessarily apprehends it clearly and distinctly, and cannot do otherwise. Whereas on the contrary, if any disproportionable Object should be propos'd to it, the Apprehension thereof must needs be obscure and confus'd, unless by Education,

or frequent Use, the Understanding be so far rais'd as to acquire a due proportion with its Object, and then it will distinctly apprehend it. (2.) In judging of a Proposition, whether affirmative or negative, true or false; the Understanding cannot but assent to a plain Proposition, and suspend its Judgment concerning an obscure one. (3.) In syllogistical Deductions there lies the same Necessity; that is, when a Syllogism is propos'd, wherein a Conclusion is fairly deduc'd from the Premises, the Understanding cannot but acknowledge the Conclusion to be just, provided it understands and apprehends it rightly. (4.) And lastly, in judging of various Objects compar'd with one another, the Understanding prefers that Object which seems to be most eligible, and postpones that which it looks upon to be less eligible.

The Will is that Act of the Soul by which it is inclin'd to any Object that is propos'd to it under the Notion of Good. The Property of the Will is Liberty, whereby the Will has an Authority over its own Action, either of doing or not doing it; which is so far essential to it, that without it there would be no Will: Nay it is the very Foundation of all Vertue and Vice, and of all the Religion which God requires of Men. For if the Will were not free, there would be no Vertue in obeying, nor Vice in disobeying God: All Laws both Divine and Human would be ridiculous and unjust: Promises and Threatnings, Exhortations and Dehortations would be all to no purpose: And Rewards as well as Punishments would be unjust, and unequal. But the Consent of all Men, and the universal Voice of natural Conscience, plead for such a Liberty of Will. 'Tis Conscience that tells every Man, that he has a Principle of Action lodg'd in himself; that he has a Power of committing or omitting that Action, and if begun he may either continue or forbear such Action; and therefore applauds and absolves him for having done well, but accuses and condemns him for having done ill.

This is so self-evident a Truth, that no Man dares absolutely and openly deny it. But as to those who plead for a fatal Necessity of all Events, they cannot candidly and sincerely admit of such a Freedom of Will.

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Will. They do indeed endeavour to reconcile the Necessity of Events with the Freedom of Will, and to this purpose invent new Definitions of the Liberty of Will suitable to their Opinions; which however different in Words, can never make any alteration in the Nature of things, nor reconcile two Contradictions which mutually destroy each other.

or is it a Some there are who maintain a formal Notion of Liberty, in that the Will is free from all Constraint, and is consistent with Necessity, since it wills without Force. But by this means all spontaneous Actions, even the most necessary, would be free; and Liberty will not be the Property of the Will, but common to all spontaneous Powers whatsoever. Nay, a Man's Inclination to the chiefest Good, which is highly necessary, will according to their Opinion be very free, and so the greatest Necessity would be the highest Freedom, which is most absurd.

or is it Others therefore perceiving that there was something farther requisite to a formal Notion of Liberty, add to this Immunity from Constraint the ultimate and practical Judgment of the Understanding, which sweetly attracts the Will, and so determines it to one part of the Contradiction; that it will not and cannot be inclin'd to the opposite side, but necessarily submits to that Determination of the Understanding. But how unreasonable and absurd this Opinion is, will appear by the following Arguments. (1.) That hereby is introduc'd downright Fatality, and the highest Necessity of all human Actions: For the Notion of Liberty is to be sought for either in the Will, or in the Understanding. In the former it cannot be expected, according to their own Opinion, since the Will is necessarily determin'd by the ultimate Judgment of the Understanding: Nor in the latter, because, as we already hinted, the Action of the Understanding is necessary, and we apprehend more or less clearly any Object in proportion to its being more or less adequate to the Understanding. (2.) If the Will be necessarily determin'd by the ultimate and practical Judgment of the Understanding, then there can be no Sin that deserves Punishment; because it will depend either upon the Judgment of Reason, or upon the Will.

Will. But it is owing to neither: not to the Judgment of Reason, because its Act is purely natural and necessary, and Error is the greatest Crime the Judgment can be guilty of, which being involuntary, cannot merit Punishment. Nor can it (according to their Notion) be owing to the Will, since it is not in its power to decline following the erroneous Judgment of the Understanding; and therefore following that, it cannot deserve to be punish'd. (3.) There cannot be suppos'd any Sin against Conscience; because to act against Conscience is to act against the Dictate and practical Judgment of the Understanding: But if the Will does necessarily comply with that Judgment, it cannot be said to act against it.

Notwithstanding then all that may be said to the contrary, we conclude that the Understanding has no such Dominion over the Will, as properly and expressly to command it to do this or that: But that the last and highest of its Acts is that Judgment whereby it suggests to the Will that this or that is eligible; and among things eligible, that this is Good, that Better, &c. or 'tis fit to do this, and omit that; which is stil'd not a Despotical but a Political Authority. However, 'tis in the power of a Man's Will to obey, or not obey what his Understanding dictates and advises him to do.

The true Liberty therefore of the Will consists in an active Indifference, whereby, having all things requisite for Action, it may act or not act, and may do this rather than that. And this Liberty is so far essential to the Will, that Man had it not only in a State of Innocence; but has it in every State and Condition whatsoever, the State of Sin not excepted. For Sin as 'tis an Act of a free Power, cannot destroy the Power of the Will; because, by its inordinacy, 'tis not contrary to the Liberty of the Will, but to Virtue.

S E C T. VI.

Of the Image of God in Man.

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The Creation of Man had this peculiar in it, that God created him after his own Image and Likeness, as appears *Gen. i. 26, 27.* However this Likeness to God did not consist in his outward Form, since that (as we already shew'd, *Chap. 3. Sect. 2.*) is repugnant to the Spirituality of the Divine Nature. Nor can it properly be said to shine forth only in the Soul, or in some of its principal Faculties: For tho we do not deny but that Man with respect to them is like to, and has the Image of God impress'd upon him; yet the Scripture does no where place this Similitude in those alone, but teaches us that the whole Man was created after the Image of God. This Image is nothing else, but a certain eminent Quality and Excellency, whereby Man resembles God in a more especial manner; and it consists in that Power and Dominion which God has given to Man over all the Works of his Hands. This the Words of God both before and after the Creation of Man do sufficiently evince: And in this Dominion does he properly resemble God, being as it were a visible God here on Earth, constituted over all the rest of the Creatures. And it seems as if this were the Reason, why the Angels, of a more excellent Nature than Men, are never said to be made after the Image of God, viz. because this Dominion was not granted to them; on the contrary, they being subject to the Man *Jesus*, now exalted to the highest Heavens, are call'd ministring Spirits sent forth to minister for them who shall be Heirs of Salvation, *Heb. i. 14.*

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This Dominion, whereby Man may truly be said to resemble God, is first universal over all the visible Creatures, not one excepted, according to that of the Psalmist, *Thou madest him to have Dominion over the Works of thy Hands, thou hast put all things under his*

: *Gen. i. 26, 28.*

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Feet : All Sheep and Oxen, yea and the Beasts of the Field: The Fowl of the Air, and Fish of the Sea, and whatsoever passeth thro the Paths of the Seas'. Secondly, it is Absolute, and circumscrib'd within no other Bounds, than those of Justice and Equity. As Man gave what Names he pleas'd at first to all Living Creatures, so he has an Authority and Power both of Life and Death over them, he kills and preserves alive what Animals he thinks fit; he makes use of their Flesh for Food, and of their Skins and Fleeces for Clothing. However, Man may abuse this his Authority, as when he kills Beasts without any Necessity, or over-burdens them, or maims them, or puts them to a lingring and painful Death, so as to be pleas'd with their Sufferings: Against such Cruelty, both Nature and Revelation do declare themselves.

Both the Soul and Body of Man concur to the forming of this Image of God. First the Soul, as being endu'd with Reason, may by the Use thereof, subject all things unto it self; not only the weaker sort of Animals, but even the most fierce and strong; not only those that live upon Earth, but also such as fly in the Air, and swim in the Sea. Nay, the Soul can by the Ministry of Reason make the very Celestial Bodies useful to it self, by admitting or excluding, by increasing or abating their Light, as it thinks most proper and convenient. But then, secondly, the Body, as it is of a Form rais'd above the other Animals, and furnish'd with Hands, the Instruments of various Operations, and especially having the use of Speech, does not contribute a little towards the exercising of this Dominion.

These things are so plain, being deduc'd from Scripture, that no body can deny them. But some there are, who, besides this Representation of the Image of God in Man, do likewise require several other Endowments, by which the Image of God was manifested, *viz.* Original Rectitude or Justice, and Immortality.

This Original Justice they commonly place in the

¹ Psal. 8. 6, 7, 8.

What sort
of Recti-
tude was
in our first
Parents.

Clearness and Rectitude of the Mind, in the Sanctity and Righteousness of the Will, in the Harmony of the Senses and Passions, and in a Propensity to what is good. To this we say, that our first Parents in their primitive State were doubtless of a more perfect Nature than we, when born into the World. For their Mind was not a mere *Tabula rasa*, destitute of all Notices of things; but they were endu'd with actual Knowledg, and instructed by God in that State in all necessary Wisdom; to which was added a Capacity by Reasoning, Experience, and Revelation, of acquiring greater and farther Knowledg. However, they were not Omniscient, being ignorant of several things. They knew not, for instance, that they were naked, or rather that Nakedness was unseemly; they seem to have been ignorant that the Serpent was a dumb Creature, else they would have avoided the Cheat, with the like. Nor did their Will stand neuter in an equal Poise of Indifferency to Good and Evil: But before any Law was prescrib'd it by God, it had a natural Rectitude, so that it could not covet or do any thing inordinately. But whatever glorious Endowments either Natural or Supernatural our first Parents possess'd, yet we should be very cautious of magnifying them too much. For if the Knowledg of their Understanding, the Sanctity and Justice of their Will, and the Propensity of their Affections to Good, had been so great and perfect as some pretend, it cannot be imagin'd how Man either by the Temptation of the Devil, or the Wickedness of his own Heart, could have fell into Sin. Nay, it rather seems that Man could not have sin'd at all, unless we suppose with those Doctors, that God withdrew those Gifts from Man by which he was preserv'd from sinning, and so left him under a fatal Necessity of falling into Sin; which is to make God the Author of Sin, than which nothing can be more blasphemous.

The Image
of God did
not consist
herein.

But the Scripture it self does no where ascribe such a perfect Sanctity and Righteousness to our first Parents; much less does it say, that the Image of God, after which Man was created, consisted in this Righteousness, since there are several Passages in Scripture from which we may infer the contrary. For after this Righteousness was lost by Sin, Man is still said to be made after the Image

Image of God, to which purpose you may consult these two plain Texts, viz. *Gen. 9. 6.* and *Jam. 3. 9.*

Against what we have said they urge, That *St. Paul* makes the Image of God to consist in Justice and Sanctity; thus *Eph. 4. 24.* Put ye on the New Man, which after God is created in Righteousness and true Holiness. And *Col. 3. 10.* Put on the New Man, which is renew'd in Knowledge, after the Image of him that created him.

An Objection answered, Eph. 4. & Col. 10. explained.

Ans. 'Tis evident at first view that the Apostle in these Places does not treat of the first Creation of Man, but of the New Creation or Regeneration carry'd on by our Lord Jesus Christ: And in this sense the Words *Creation* and *Creature* are sometimes taken in the New Testament; and must be understood so here, as appears upon these two accounts: (1.) Because the New Man is here said to be created and renew'd, whereas the first State of Men is no where in Scripture call'd the New Man. (2.) Because the Scripture, distinguishing betwixt the Old and New Man, by the former always means the State of Sin wherein a Man liv'd before his Conversion and Faith in Jesus Christ; and by the latter, that new Way of Life prescrib'd us by our Saviour both by Precept and Example.

As to Immortality, they lodg it not only in the Soul, which we have already prov'd to be immortal, but likewise in the Body or whole Man. To this again we say, that 'tis not to be doubted but that if the first Man had not sin'd, he would never have died: For Death was that Punishment of Sin with which God threaten'd Man, so that if he had remain'd Innocent, he would have been free from Death. However the Immortality of Man is not rightly infer'd from thence; for Mortality is one thing, and Death or a Necessity of dying is another. The very Formation of Man's Body out of the Dust of the Earth bears witness to this Truth; for as it was compos'd of its Principles, so it is dissolvable to the same again: It stands in need of Meat and Drink for its Support, even in the State of Innocence. Nay, if the Body of our first Parent had

In what sense our first Parents were Immortal.

not been mortal, he could not have died even after he had committed Sin, unless his Nature had been quite alter'd by God, and had been from immortal made mortal. However, had Man remain'd innocent, God could have for ever preserv'd this Mortality from actual Dying: And to this purpose he plac'd the Tree of Life in the midst of Paradise, that by virtue thereof Man might have prolong'd his Days. But upon the Fall, Man was driven out of Paradise, debar'd of the Benefit of that Tree, so that he was depriv'd of that notable Means of prolonging his Life, and hasten'd to a certain Death. But we need not insist any longer on this Point, since they who maintain the Immortality of our first Parents, are really of the same Opinion with us. For when they speak their Minds seriously, they confess, that Man upon the account of the Principles of which he is compos'd, and of the Qualities which adhere to him, had in himself a possibility of dying: However that he was immortal, because he had annex'd to him the power of not Dying, and a most certain Immunity from actual Death by the Favour of God, had he not sin'd. Now this is just the same with what we affirm.

Image But after all, I can hardly perceive for what reason
God did they should establish the Image of God in such an Im-
consist mortality, since it is of a quite different Nature from
ein. the Immortality of God, and there can be no Resemblance or Image between the one and the other. Besides, the Scripture has no where plac'd the Image of God in the Immortality of Man. Nor is it requisite that we should refer all things, whereby Man does in some measure resemble God, to this Head: 'Tis enough if there be but only one eminent Quality, whereby Man represents God, that so he may be said to have been made after his Image; and this the Scripture, as we have already seen, declares to be the Dominion of Man over the rest of the Creatures.

Use. The Use we ought to make of this Doctrine of the Creation, amounts to this: (1.) To acknowledg and praise the Goodness, Wisdom and Power of God, which do most eminently shine forth in this Work. (2.) To acknowledg the absolute Dominion of God: Because whatever good thing Man possesses, he owes it to
God

God from whom he receiv'd it; and therefore is he oblig'd to render and dedicate it to God, to obey him in all things, and even to lay down his Life in his Service. (3.) Because he has a Dominion over all the rest, he ought not to make himself a Slave to those sensual Pleasures, which we hold in common with the Beasts that perish; but to be Lord and Master over them, as well as he is over the Animals: And as he resembles the Image of God in his Dominion, so should he likewise do it in true Righteousness and Holiness.

C H A P. VIII.

Of the Providence of God in general.

THE other External Work of God is Providence, *The Providence of* which is that Constant and Omnipotent Government of God, whereby he takes care of and governs the whole World, and all things even the least Individuals that are therein, especially Men: And this he does in a manner that most becomes his Wisdom, and is most suitable to the Nature and State of every Creature, for their Good, and the Glory of his own Name. Whoever then takes away Providence, denies God, who is known chiefly by his Works: which if any one should attribute to blind Chance or Fortune, or to a necessary and natural Law of Fate, there would be no Argument to convince him of the Existence of God; so that the denying of Providence, is the next door to Atheism.

But to treat more distinctly of the Divine Providence, these three things are to be consider'd in it: First, the Object of it; Secondly, its Actions; and Thirdly, the Manner of it.

The Object of the Divine Providence is this Universe, *Its Object* and all things which are therein, not any thing, no not the meanest and vilest, excepted. It is not therefore sufficient to believe that God only takes care of the Species of things, but not of Individuals; for there

are no Species without their Individuals, and therefore God cannot be said to take care of the one and not of the other.

Actions But that we may shew more clearly after what method the Divine Providence is exercis'd about all things, it is necessary that we should first of all consider its Actions; and they are two, Preservation and Government, to which some add a third, *viz.* Concurrence.

Preservation. Preservation is that Act of Divine Providence, whereby God maintains all Beings, both with respect to their Essence, and to the Faculties which he has given them at their Creation, in the same State for some certain space of time, as it seems best to his Wisdom: And this is either of Individuals or of Species. Some Individuals God preserves from the very Beginning to the End of the World, such as the Sun, Moon, Stars, &c. Others he preserves for some short space of Time prefix'd to them, which being elaps'd they die and perish. The Species are preserv'd by a constant Propagation of the Individuals, by which there is a continued Succession of them; so that tho they are but of a short Duration, yet they are by one's succeeding another made as it were perpetual: And thus Men, Animals and Plants are preserv'd.

Whether it be a positive or negative Act of God. But here a Question arises, whether this Preservation be a positive Act of God, whereby he has an immediate Influence over the Essence of things, and continually creates them anew, so that Preservation is nothing else but a continual Creation: or whether it be a negative Act, not such whereby God ceases from all Action; but only this, that tho he be endu'd with a Sovereign Power and Authority of taking away from all things their very Being, yet he will not destroy the Essences, Powers and Faculties of the Creatures, but leaves them in the same Vigour they had at their Creation, as long as it can last. There is no necessity of determining this Question either one way or other, since the Advocates of each Opinion design to advance the Glory of God thereby. Nor shall we insist on any other nice Enquiries about this matter, supposing it sufficient for the Advancement of true Religion, and the Glory of God, to observe, that the Scripture in many Places represents

represents God as the Preserver of all things. Thus 'tis said, *He, i. e. God, giveth to all Life, and Breath, and all things: For in him we live, and move, and have our Being*¹. Again, *Thou even thou art Lord alone, thou hast made Heaven, the Heaven of Heavens, &c. and thou preservest them all*². Again, *Thou, O Lord, preservest Man and Beast*³: *He giveth to the Beast his Food, and to the young Ravens which cry*⁴. So God is said to feed the Fowls of the Air, who neither sow nor reap, and to preserve the very Lilies of the Field⁵; and without his Knowledg not a Sparrow, two of which were sold for a Farthing, falls to the Ground⁶.

The Government of Providence is that powerful Act of God, whereby he administers and disposes of all things with the highest Wisdom, so as shall best tend to the Advancement of his Glory, and the Eternal Welfare of Mankind. This Government extends it self to all things, so that there is nothing in the whole Universe but what is under the Guidance of Providence. This is what the Scripture does abundantly evince, since it reckons up all the several sorts of Creatures, and subjects them all to the Divine Providence. The whole Heaven is govern'd by it, as appears by that constant Course it takes without any Variation: And that the Sun is under the Inspection and Guidance of Providence, is plain from that Oblique Motion it makes thro the Ecliptick, whereby it diffuses its Heat at stated Seasons to all the Earth, not one Part wanting the Influence of its Rays; and by these various Revolutions it forms the Seasons of Spring, Summer, Autumn and Winter. Hence 'tis said in Scripture, *The Heavens declare the Glory of God, and the Firmament sheweth his Handy-work*⁷, &c. We are likewise taught that the Stars are under the Direction of the Divine Providence⁸; as also that the Air, and all things therein, such as Rain, Winds, &c. are under the same Government⁹: That God doth water the Earth, to

2. The Government of Providence extends to things.

¹ Acts 17. 25, 28. ² Neh. 9. 6. ³ Psal. 36. 6. ⁴ Psal. 147. 9. ⁵ Matt. 6. 26, &c. Luke 12. 24. ⁶ Matt. 10. 27. ⁷ Psal. 19. 1, &c. & 104. 136. Job Chap. 38, & 39. Matt. 5. 45. Is. 40. 22. ⁸ Psal. 147. 4. Is. 40. 26. ⁹ Psal. 147. 8. Matt. 5. 45. 1 Kings Chap. 17, & 18.

bring forth Food both for the Use of Men and Beasts¹; And that he takes care of all that live upon the Face of the Earth, in providing them Necessaries proper for the Support of Life².

And that all these are govern'd more especially by the Divine Care, appears most evidently from hence, that God does sometimes produce and preserve them as a Reward to those who obey him; giving them Rain from Heaven, and affording them rich Crops of the Earth with a liberal Hand; nay, he makes all the other Creatures to be subservient to them: Whilst on the other hand, God either withholds his Blessings from the Wicked, or else renders them poisonous and hurtful, and makes the whole Creation to fight against the Unwile. Of this we have abundance of Instances in Scripture, so that God may well be stil'd the *Lord of Sabbath*, or of Hosts, since he employs not only Angels, but all the other Creatures, even the Inanimate, to be his Ministers and Armies for the executing of his Judgments in favour of the Good, and for the punishment of the Wicked.

However, some there are who produce two Texts of Scripture, by which they seem to deny that God's Providence is concern'd about Beasts.

ab. i. 14. The first Place alledg'd by them is, *Hab. i. 14. Thou plain'd. makest Men as the Fishes of the Sea, as the creeping things that have no Ruler over them.* *Ans.* It is not here said that the Fishes of the Sea were not subject to the Government of God; but only that they had no Ruler to protect them from the Violence of the Stronger; the Less being devour'd by the Greater without any Remedy or Protection. The Prophet therefore does not mean, that the Fishes were exempt from the Providence of God; but by this Allusion laments the sad Estate of his People, being abandon'd by God, deliver'd into the Hands of their Enemies the *Chaldeans*, having no Protector to deliver them out of their Hands.

¹ Psal. 65. 10.

² Psal. 36. 7. & 145. 15, 16. & 147. 8, 9.

The other Place is, 1 Cor. 9. 9. *Doth God take care for Oxen?* *Ans.* The Apostle by this Question does not explain, that God takes no care of Oxen, since he alludes to a Place in the Law, which plainly evinces the contrary: But his meaning is, that the principal and primary Intention of the making that Law was not for the sake of Oxen, but of Men: That the Labourer in the Gospel was as worthy of his Hire, and the Ministers of the Church were to be supply'd with the Necessaries of Life, as much as the Oxen who trod out the Corn.

As to the third Act of Divine Providence, viz. Concurrence, it is that by which God is said so to concur with all his Creatures, as that all their Motion and Operation depends upon God in particular, as the first Cause. This is usually divided by the Schoolmen into a simultaneous Concurrence, whereby God together with his Creatures is said to have an influence over their Actions, which Concurrence is determin'd by the Creature to some particular Action: And into a previous Concurrence, whereby God influences the very Creatures, by moving, exciting and determining them before-hand by a natural Predetermination, and by applying them to Act. As for our parts, we readily acknowledge the former; but the latter we look upon to be absurd, since thereby the Powers of acting seem in vain to have been granted to Creatures, as being incapable of all Action, unless excited and mov'd thereto by this previous Concurrence of God. But of this more hereafter.

The Methods of Divine Providence are various, according to the Objects about which it is conversant. As, (1.) it takes a greater care of the more Noble than of the less Noble, of Men than of Beasts, of Beasts than of Plants and Herbs: The latter being made for the Use and Service of the former, and consequently have the least share in the Providence of God. (2.) It is accommodated to the several distinct Natures of the Creatures, God dealing in a different way with Inanimate and with Animate Beings, with Creatures endu'd only with Life and Sense, and with those that are endu'd with Reason. (3.) It is most free, according to the Absolute Dominion of God over his Creatures, making use sometimes of one, sometimes of another, some-

times in this, sometimes in that manner, as he pleases. (4.) It is irresistible, viz. in those things which God wills to do absolutely.

C H A P. IX.

Of the Divine Providence, with respect to Men.

WHAT hath hitherto been said of the Divine Providence, ought to be apply'd to Man in particular; for whom, as we have already seen, God made all things, and for whose sake he preserves and governs them. With respect to Man, we shall consider both the foremention'd Acts of Providence, viz. *Preservation* and *Government*, in two distinct Sections.

S E C T. I.

Of the Preservation of Providence with respect to Man.

This *Preservation* we will consider as it relates to Mankind in general, and then as it respects the several Individuals of the Human Species.

In the first place with respect to the Species of Mankind, 'tis plain that God has granted to Men a Power of Generating their Kind'; and has preserv'd it down to our time. Sometimes he has restor'd that Power when lost, by making the Barren to be fruitful, as in the Case of *Abraham* and *Sarah*², the Parents of *Sampson*³, *Hannah* the Mother of *Samuel*⁴, *Zachariah* and *Elizabeth*⁵. Hence it is, that bearing of Children is reckon'd among the Blessings of the Law⁶, and Children are stil'd an

¹ Gen. 1. 28. ² Gen. 17. 15. ³ Judg. 13. ⁴ 1 Sam. 1.
⁵ Luk. 1. ⁶ Exod. 23. 26. Deut. 7. 4.

Heritage and Gift that cometh of the Lord ¹. Sometimes God inflicteth Barrenness for the Punishment of some Sin, and thus he afflicted the Family of *Abimelech* for *Sarah's* sake ². By reason of this manifold Providence of God, with respect to the Generating of Mankind, it is, that in Scripture is ascrib'd to him the Formation of Man in the Womb ³, and also his Generation and Birth ⁴.

After Men are born, God supplies them with all things necessary for the Support of Life. For Infants he prepares Milk in their Mothers Breasts, and by a secret sort of instinct adapts their Tongues for the sucking in the same. Nor is his Hand less liberal and munificent to Man during the whole Course of his Life: For *he gives us Rain from Heaven, and fruitful Seasons; filling our Hearts with Food and Gladness* ⁵.

But here a Question may be rais'd: Whether the Number of Men be not determin'd by the Eternal Decree of God, and in process of Time the Generations of Man are not so directed by his Providence, as that neither more nor less Men could be born, than are really born? *Ans.* By no means; and the reason is plain: Because an absolute Decree ought to be executed by absolute Means. If therefore God has by an absolute and eternal Decree determin'd the Number of Men, it follows that he has by the same Decree determin'd, and by his Providence has from time to time procur'd, and does still procure all those Copulations from which Men are born. But many of these are unlawful, dishonest, and even incestuous; so that consequently God would be the Author of all the Acts of Fornication, Adultery, and Incest, by which Men have been ever, or shall hereafter be born; which cannot be suppos'd without the highest Blasphemy. Add to this, that God has left every Man at his liberty to live a single or a marry'd Life.

From hence we likewise infer the Groundlessness of their Notion, who maintain the Fatality of Marriages, as if all of them were pre-determin'd by the Eternal Decree of God.

¹ Psal. 127. 3. & 128. 3. ² Gen. 20. ³ Job 10. 8, &c. Psal. 139. 15, 16. ⁴ Psal. 22. 10. & 71. 6. ⁵ Acts 14. 17.

nal Decree of God. 'Tis true indeed, God presides over Marriages, for it was he who first instituted that Holy Ordinance; and his Direction when sought after has a great influence over Marriages, as in the Case of *Isaac* and *Jacob*, and others which we read of in Holy Writ. But far be it from us to suppose that God has by his Absolute and Eternal Decree determin'd all the Marriages which are contracted; since several have been contracted contrary to his Command, as the *Israelites* marrying with strange Women; and many others have been sinful.

2. The Preservation of Individuals,

The Preservation of Individuals is that whereby God preserves every Man in Life to such a certain Period, which being elaps'd, he puts an end to Life. Concerning this Term of Life 'tis ask'd, whether it be fatal or alterable? Or in other words, whether it be so fix'd, that both the Time of Life, and all the Circumstances of it be so determin'd by the Absolute and Eternal Decree of God, that Man ought necessarily to arrive at that Period prefix'd him from all Eternity, and cannot by any Method or Means whatsoever exceed it?

The Opinion concerning the Period of Man's Life set down in our Propositions.

As for our parts, we maintain that God has appointed the Period of human Life, so as is most agreeable to his Wisdom and Justice. And (1.) that he has subjected Man and all his Posterity, by reason of Sin, to a necessary Death: And that he has circumscrib'd the Life of Man within such Bounds as he cannot pass. (2.) That God by his absolute Will and Pleasure does not give to all Men the same Constitution of Body, but to some a more happy Constitution than to others; and that this for the most part depends upon the Parents from whom they are descended, according as they are more or less healthful and strong. This is to be look'd upon as the natural Effect of a good or a bad Constitution, tho God is not so far tied up by it, but that he may, when he pleases, recede from this ordinary and usual Method. (3.) That God as a just Judge, considering the Works and Ways of Men from his Throne, will either prolong the Life of a pious Man to the Period he has fix'd, or else cut off and shorten the Life of an impious Man, so that he shall not live out half his Days. (4.) That God in this prolonging or shortning

of our Days has sometimes regard to the Constitution, either by preserving it in its Vigour, if strong, or by leaving it to its natural Infirmary, if weak: Sometimes he has no regard to the Constitution, but either strengthens and corroborates it, if it be infirm, as a Reward of Piety, for the prolonging of Life to a longer Date than the Force of Nature could carry it; or if it be strong, then by Diseases and other means he disturbs and breaks it, as a Punishment of Impiety; so that the Wicked may not live out half their Days.

After all we are not of opinion, that this Period is so fix'd by the Eternal and Absolute Decree of God, as that it cannot by any means be alter'd; for right Reason, as well as the Scripture, is against such a Notion.

Right Reason informs, that a Man by a due use or supine neglect of the Means, may either prolong or shorten his Days: That, for instance, he may by Temperance preserve, and by Intemperance break the Strength of his Constitution: That he may by Prudence avoid, and by Imprudence throw himself into various Dangers: Lastly, that if he falls sick, he may make use of the Advice of a skilful Physician for the Recovery of his Health; or neglect so doing, and by the not using of due Remedies may add Force to his Distemper, and hasten his Death. To say then that all these things are fix'd by the Decree of God, that if a long or a short Life be to be thy Portion, it proceeds from that Decree which has determin'd thee to live either temperately and prudently, or intemperately and carelessly; is not only to discourage Men from the due use of the Means, and from taking care of themselves, but is to charge God with all the Intemperance and Neglect they may be guilty of; which is impious to assert. Add to this another Reason, *viz.* because (as we have already evinc'd) the Birth of Man is not determin'd by the Absolute Decree of God, neither can his Death.

But to set aside Reason, the Scripture furnishes us with several Arguments to the same purpose. In the first place there are several Promises of long Life made to the Righteous and Obedient. Thus the fifth Commandment of honouring our Parents is back'd with this Promise, *That thy Days may be long in the Land* which

*Not fix'd
God's Ete
nal and A
bsolute D
ecree.*

*Prov'd
from Re
ason.*

*From Scri
pture, wh
has, I. P
mises in
of long L
to the God*

which the Lord thy God giveth thee¹: And to this agree these Words, *Ye shall serve the Lord your God, and he shall bless thy Bread, and thy Water, and I will take Sickness away from the midst of thee: There shall nothing cast their Young, nor be barren in thy Land; the Number of thy Days I will fulfil²*. So likewise God promis'd Solomon Length of Days upon his Obedience to the Divine Commands³; which made that wise Man himself to say, *The Fear of the Lord longeth Days, but the Years of the Wicked shall be shorten'd⁴*. However we freely own that these and the like Promises are not to be taken in a strict and unlimited sense, without any Exception; for God has for wise and just Reasons, best known to himself, receded from this General Rule: Particularly he has by an untimely Death taken away the Righteous, that they might not be involv'd in that general Calamity and Destruction which he design'd to bring upon a rebellious, disobedient, and gainsaying People: But this removing them from the Wrath to come, is so far from being any Injury, that 'tis a great Blessing to them.

Threat- Secondly, God in Scripture threatens to shorten the Days of the Wicked for their Wickedness. Thus he threatens to afflict the Transgressors of his Law with great Plagues, and sore Sickneses of long continuance⁵: And that none may pretend that a Man may indeed fall sick, and yet not die before his appointed time, 'tis farther said, that *Bloody and Deceitful Men shall not live out half their Days⁶*: From whence David himself prays to God not to take him away in the midst of his Days⁷.

Instances Thirdly, we have various Examples in Scripture, of Mens Lives being shorten'd for their Wickedness. Famous is that Instance of *Er and Onan* the Sons of *Judah*, of whom 'tis said expressly, that *the Lord slew them, because they did Evil in his Sight⁸*; as is also that of *Abalom*, who for rebelling against his Father *David*, was cut off in the Flower of his Age⁹. The same is

¹ Exod. 20. 12. Repeated Eph. 6. 2. ² Exod. 23. 25. See to the same purpose, Deut. 4. 40. Ch. 30. 20. Psal. 91. 16. ³ 1 Kings 3. 14. ⁴ Prov. 10. 27. ⁵ Deut. 28. 58. ⁶ Psal. 55. 23. ⁷ Psal. 102. 24. ⁸ Gen. 38. 7, 10. ⁹ 2 Sam. 18. 14. likewise

likewise manifest from those general Destructions which God brought upon a whole People for their Sins, as in his cutting off the Old World by the Flood, his overthrowing of *Sodom* and *Gomorrhah* by Fire from Heaven, &c.

Fourthly and lastly, we have several Examples of Death's being delay'd upon the Repentance of the Sinners. Thus God spar'd the *Ninivites* upon their Repentance, tho the Denunciation against them was, that *within forty Days they should be destroy'd*¹. So he added fifteen Years to the Life of King *Hezekiah*, upon the Prayer he made, tho he had sent the Prophet *Isaiah* to him with this Message, *Set thy House in order, for thou shalt die, and not live*².

4. Exam-
ples of
Death re-
spited upon
Repentance.

Against these plain Texts of Scripture there can hardly any thing be objected with any colour of Reason, besides this single Passage, Job 14. 5. *His (i. e. Man's) Days are determin'd, the Number of his Months are with thee, thou hast appointed his Bounds, that he cannot pass.* Answ. But this Text does not say, that the Period of every one's Life is so fix'd by the absolute Decree of God, that it cannot be alter'd: It only informs us that the Term of human Life is included within a short compass of time, beyond which a Man cannot pass; and this we freely assent to. Now this Period is defin'd to be between seventy and eighty Years of Age³; from whence our Life is usually compar'd to the most transient and vanishing things, such as a Flower, a Vapour, &c.⁴

S E C T. II.

Of the Government of Divine Providence with respect to Men.

The Government of Divine Providence is that where-
by God over-rules, directs and observes all the Actions
of Men, and passes a just Judgment upon them according to their Works.

The Go-
vernment
of Divine
Provi-
dence.

¹ Jon. 3. ult. ² Is. 38. 1. ³ Psal. 90. 10. ⁴ Psal. 39. 6.
& 103. 15. Jam. 4. 14.

*Its first Act
is prescrib-
ing of
Laws.*

The first Act of this Government is Legislation, or making a Law, whereby God prescribes Bounds to the Will of Man, which else would be its own Master; so that it can justly will only those things which God commands or permits. This Law was prescrib'd to Man at the very Creation: And tho afterwards the more especial Revelations of the Divine Will were made to *Abraham* and his Posterity; and a particular Law enacted upon Promises and Threatnings was given to the *Jews* by the hands of *Moses*; yet still the rest of Mankind had the Law of Nature written in their Hearts, to inform them of the Difference between Good and Evil. But the most perfect Law which God prescrib'd to Mankind, was that which he made by his Son *Jesus Christ*.

*God grants
sufficient
Assistance
for the per-
formance
thereof.*

The Law being made, God grants to Man sufficient Assistances for the observation thereof: If his natural Powers are too weak, then God bestows upon him supernatural Aid, and is ready to confer greater upon him, provided he earnestly and seriously puts up his Petition to Heaven for it.

*Is delighted
with the O-
bedient, but
hates Sin.*

These Means being afforded by God, the State of Men becomes from thence various: For some making a right use of them, obey the Divine Law; whilst others thro the Wickedness of their Hearts abusing them, commit Sin by a voluntary Transgression of the Law. According to this Variety of Men, the Acts of Divine Providence do also vary. As to their Obedience, and the Actions perform'd according to it, God takes notice of, is delighted with, and resolves to reward them; for their sake he loves the obedient Man, and places him among the number of those who shall be sav'd. But as for Sin, God hates and abominates it, as being contrary to his Nature, who is of purer Eyes than to behold Iniquity: Nay, he expressly forbids Sin under very grievous Threatnings, and at last severely punishes it both in this, and in the other World. However, he is not willing to exert his Omnipotence to put a stop to it, since he requires a free Obedience; nor is it agreeable to his Wisdom by an Almighty Power to prevent that Sin to be committed, which he has forbidden by threatening the severest Punishment. Besides, it would reflect upon the Divine Glory, if he had no Volun-

Volunteers in his Service, but only such as were forc'd to obey by an Almighty Power; whereas Satan has a great many Slaves and Vassals made so by their own Free-Will.

Having thus briefly shewn the Acts of the Government of Divine Providence with respect to Man, it will be requisite to take notice of some other things relating to this Point.

And here, in the first place, it may be ask'd, Does not God concur with all the Actions of Men? To this we answer, That when we treated of the Providence of God in general, we acknowledg'd the simultaneous Concurrence of God, whereby he applies his efficacious Power to Man, by whom, as by a free Agent, it is determin'd to such or such an Action. But some there are who are not satisfy'd with such a Concurrence, but require another, which some call an immediate, previous, and predetermining Concurrence; others the very Operation of God, whereby he worketh all in all, &c.

The Concurrence of God does not predetermine Men.

But such a Concurrence and continual Creation of God cannot be admitted without the highest Absurdity, and that upon these two accounts: (1.) Because God has in vain granted to Man a Power of Acting, and endu'd him with Free-Will, if the Divine Creation be requisite to every one of his Actions: For to what purpose has he either the one or the other, if there is no use of either, and if Man can do nothing, not so much as conceive any thing, unless predetermin'd by the Concurrence of God; nor omit any Action, if compel'd to act by that Concurrence? (2.) If every Action does wholly depend upon God, then every evil Action does so too, and consequently God is the Author of Sin, and Man acquitted from all Guilt, since he only does what the Concurrence of God has predetermin'd him to do.

To this they object, "That there is no Consequence in this Argument, because in Sin we ought to distinguish the physical Goodness of the Action from the moral Turpitude thereof: That God is indeed the Author of the former; but as to the Action it self, it being Sin, and repugnant to the Divine Law, this proceeds from Man alone." *Ans.* This Distinction

Several Objections answer'd. Obj. 1.

tion may be admitted in such Sins, wherein not the Action it self is forbidden, but only some certain Mode or Manner of it, which vitiates the Action, that is of it self good, and commanded by God. Thus a Man may pray, fast, and give Alms to be seen of Men; and here the Vitiousness of the Action proceeds from himself alone; whereas the Action it self, consider'd without that Corruption, is good, and proceeds from God. But when not only the Circumstance, but the very Act it self is forbidden, such as Theft, Adultery, Perjury, &c. then this Distinction can have no place; because there is no Goodness in them, but they are in their very Nature evil.

b). 2.

Again they urge, " That God is the Author of every Being, but the Actions of Men are Beings, therefore God is the Author of them." *Ans.* God is indeed the Author of Beings properly so call'd, such as Substances; but Actions are not so much Beings as Modes of Beings. He may be said to be the Author of them so far as he preserves not only the Essences of Men, but also their Powers of acting, with which he endu'd them at their Creation. As to good Actions, we freely own him to be the Author of them, since he not only commands them, confers an Ability to perform them, but also after a special manner promotes and forwards them. But as to evil Actions, which he has forbidden, and are contrary to his Nature, he can by no means be said to be the Author of them: for then his Concurrence would run counter to his Precepts, ordering that to be done, which by his Precepts was forbidden.

b). 3.

Lastly they object, " That unless such a Concurrence be allow'd of, the Actions of Men will not depend upon God; and so Man will be an independent Being, and consequently God." *Ans.* This Argument is not conclusive, " Man does not depend upon God in acting after this way, therefore he does not depend upon him at all." What a trifling Inference is this? Doubtless a Man cannot so much as conceive in his Mind, much less can he execute his own Actions, unless by the Knowledg, Permission and Assistance of God. Besides, God can, when he pleases, by his bare Authority, prevent the Actions, or else direct them to quite

quite another end than what Man designs; and lastly, if they be evil, he can punish them.

We pass by the other things which the Men of that Way urge in maintenance of the predetermining Concurrence of God, since they would afford but a dry sort of Entertainment to the pious Reader; and having answer'd the principal Objections, the rest will naturally fall to the ground.

And as to the several places of Scripture, which they produce, and look upon as favouring their Opinion; it is plain they wrest, and lay too great a Violence upon them, as will appear by what follows.

The first Passage which they urge, is *Acts* 17. 28. *In him we live, move, and have our Being.* *Ans.* In him is as much as to say, by him; that is, 'tis he who bestows upon us those Powers of living, moving and existing: yet he does not so immediately concur with us, as to predetermine our Actions, and a-new create our Volitions.

In the next place they produce some Texts, wherein God is said to do all things: as *John* 5. 7. *My Father worketh hitherto, and I work.* *Isa.* 26. 12. *Thou also hast wrought all our Works in us.* And *1 Cor.* 12. 6. *God worketh all in all.* *Ans.* The first of these Places treats of the Concurrence of God in the working of Miracles; namely, our Lord informs us, that the Miracle for which the *Jews* would have kill'd him, because it was done on their Sabbath, was not wrought by him, but only so far as his Father granted him that Power. They are in the wrong therefore who infer from hence the Concurrence of God to be necessary for all and every the Actions of Men, even such as are prohibited by him. As to the second Passage, 'tis plain from the Words that immediately precede, that it treats of the Benefits of God towards the *Israelites*; and therefore *Works* in this place are not theirs, but God's Works. The third Text treats only of the miraculous Operations of the Holy Ghost; and therefore no consequence can be drawn from thence for all other Actions, especially those that are wicked and vicious.

Thirdly, they alledg two other Places very like the former, viz. *Rom.* 11. 36. *Of him, and through him, and to him are all things.* And *Eph.* 1. 11. *He worketh*

all things after the Counsel of his own Will. Answ. 'Tis manifest that both these Places treat of the Works of Grace, which God communicates to Men, that they might be saved. Nothing therefore can be concluded from them for the immediate and previous Concurrence of God to every Act, not Sin excepted.

10. 16. 9. Lastly, they produce some Texts, wherein they pretend that this Concurrence is apparently ascribed to
20. 24. God, such as *Prov. 16. 9. A Man's Heart deviseth*
21. 1. *his way, but the Lord directeth his Steps.* Parallel to
1. 10. 23. which is *Chap. 20. 24. and Chap. 21. 1. The King's Heart is in the hand of the Lord, as the Rivers of Waters; he turneth it whithersoever he will.* And again, *Jer. 10. 23. O Lord, I know that the way of Man is not in himself, it is not in Man that walketh to direct his Steps.* Answ. From those Places nothing can be concluded in favour of this immediate Concurrence to all Actions: They only inform us of the manifold direction of God with respect to the Actions of Man, sometimes to quite another end than Man intended it: and this we shall hereafter prove. All that we urge is, That God does not excite and predetermine men to every Action, even those that are evil; which we are sure neither the Texts already mentioned, nor any other will allow of.

C H A P. X.

Of the Providence of God, especially with respect to Sin.

IN the last Chapter we just hinted at the Nature of God's Providence with respect to Sin; and now for a more distinct comprehension thereof, we will consider its Operation with regard to Sin, Before, At, and After the Commission thereof. These things, with some incidental Matters, which will fall in naturally and of course, we shall discourse of in the several Sections of this Chapter.

S E C T. I.

Of Divine Providence with respect to Sin, before it be committed.

Before any Sin be committed, God may be said to *God permit* permit it; which Permission is not to be look'd upon *Sin before* as a bare and idle Contemplation of the Sin, but as *it be committed.* a Resolution of suffering a Man to use his own Liberty, and of not putting that stop to Sin which he might have done, and likewise join'd with a Resolution of punishing it, if it be committed.

There are two ways by which God hinders Sin, *Hinders i* according to which a twofold Permission of it will fall *two ways.* under our consideration: For God either hinders it by his Justice, forbidding it by a Law enacted on Promises and Threatnings, or else by his Almighty Power preventing a Man from committing it.

Sin may be consider'd, either as an internal Act of the Will, or as an external Act proceeding from thence, and perform'd by the Members of the Body. In the former sense, Sin is not hinder'd by the Omnipotence of God; nor can it be hinder'd without destroying the Freedom of Will. But Sin taken in the latter sense, as an external Act, is prevented by the Almighty Power of God several Ways; as (1.) By taking away the Life of the Sinner, which was the Case of *Pharaoh*¹, *Sennacherib* and his Army², and the Soldiers of *Ahaziah*, who were sent to apprehend *Elijah*³. (2.) By taking away their Force and Strength to Sin, as in the *Sodomites*⁴, *Balaam*⁵, *Jeroboam*⁶, the Soldiers of the King of *Syria*⁷. (3.) By opposing a greater Power, of which we have an instance in *Abshalom*⁸, and *Adonijah*⁹, which last confess'd it was of the Lord. (4.) And lastly, by removing the occasion of Sin, or

¹ Exod. 14. 27, 28. ² 2 Kings 19. 36, 37, 38. ³ 2 Kings 1. 10, 11, 12. ⁴ Gen. 19. 10, 11. ⁵ Numb. 23. 12, 26. & 24. 13. ⁶ 1 Kings 12. 4. ⁷ 2 Kings 6. 18, 19. ⁸ 2 Sam. 18. ⁹ 1 Kings 1.

the Object against which Men had design'd to commit the Act of Sin. Thus he hinder'd *Saul* from killing of *David*¹, *Ahab* and *Jezebel* from destroying the Prophets², *Herod* from destroying the Child *Jesus*³, another *Herod* from putting *Peter* to death⁴, and the forty Conspirators from murdering of *Paul*⁵.

When therefore God acts contrary to these Methods of preventing Sin, then he may be said to permit it: As first, when he makes any relaxation in his Law, or abolishes it, and grants to Men a Power of Sinning without Punishment. But this God never does, because it would be contrary to his Nature and Holiness, which he cannot forgo. As to the Instance which some produce of the *Israelites* robbing the *Egyptians* by the Command of God, no consequence can be drawn from thence to prove that God can abolish that Law which forbids Theft: for this was an extraordinary Case, wherein God did act not only as an Absolute and Supreme Lord, who can dispose of all things in this World as he pleases, but also as a just, severe and avenging Judg, who rewarded the oppress'd *Israelites*, by thus spoiling their Oppressors and hard Task-masters the *Egyptians*; and this Act of the *Israelites* is by no means to be look'd upon as Theft, but only as an Execution of the just Sentence of God.

But secondly, God permits Sin, when he does not put that stop to the Commission of it which he might have done, but allows the Man to make use of his Liberty, and actually to commit that Wickedness which he had design'd in his Heart. This Permission therefore is not an idle Contemplation of Sin, but a Preservation of the Faculties granted to Man, and an Allowance of the free Use of them, without interposing any Hindrance to prevent them.

Besides this Permission, we are likewise to consider that Dispensation of Divine Providence by which God sometimes lays before Men those Opportunities and Occasions of sinning which they readily lay hold of, and thereby harden themselves more and more in Sin. But

¹ 1 Sam. 19. 11, 12, &c. ² 1 Kings 18. 4. ³ Matt. 2. 13, 14, 15. ⁴ Acts 12. ⁵ Acts 23.

this is principally to be understood of such Sinners, who by their enormous and continu'd Transgressions have incur'd the Divine Displeasure; and of whom God is said to blind their Eyes, to harden their Hearts, and to give them over to a reprobate Sense. To such Sinners those Temptations are offer'd as Marks of the Divine Wrath; whom in just Judgment he suffers to be harden'd. But sometimes God offers these Opportunities and Occasions of sinning, not as a Punishment of the Sinners, but to try and prove them; as also to render the Virtue and Constancy of good Men the more illustrious, and to shew to all the World the Frailty and Insincerity of others.

After all it cannot be said, that by this Permission of the Divine Providence, nor by the laying before Men Opportunities of sinning, any Man is tempted by God. For (as St. James very justly observes) God cannot be tempted with Evil, neither tempteth he any Man: But every Man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own Lust, and entic'd. Then when Lust hath conceiv'd, it bringeth forth Sin; and Sin when it is finish'd, bringeth forth Death.

S E C T. II.

An Examination of their Opinion, who ascribe to God an Efficacious Providence (as they term it) with respect to Sin.

Some there are, who besides these Operations of God with respect to Sin, ascribe to him an Efficacious Providence, as they call it: that is, they attribute to God such a Government, whereby a Man's Will is so dispos'd, as necessarily to will Sin. But this is to make God the Author of Sin, and to destroy the Freedom of the Will, without which there can be no such thing as Virtue and Vice, Rewards or Punishments; and consequently this would be to acquit Man of the Guilt of Sin.

Others being aware of this, to avoid the Odium of such an Opinion, express their Minds in softer Terms, and say, that God does not appoint but permit Sin: Which is true indeed, if by Permission they under-

God does not order that Man should necessarily will Sin.

Nor does he permit Sin after that manner.

stood no more than his not putting that stop to the Commission of Sin which he might have done, &c. But they by Permission mean something else, viz. an active, determining, and appointing Permission, and such as being suppos'd, Sin is the necessary Consequence thereof, and which consists not in a mere not hindring, but in a positive willing. Now what difference is there between such a Permission, and a direct Appointment? Do not they both amount to the same thing, and make Sin to be necessary, and consequently God by thus appointing it, to be the Author of it?

Objections
answer'd.

Obj. 1.

But here they urge, "That Sin is not the Product of God's Permission, but is only consequent thereto. " For Non-concession of Grace with respect to God is " only a bare Negation, without the infringement of " any Obligation: But not to do Good, is in Man a " failure of his Duty." *Ans.* If a Man necessarily falls into Sin, by the Withdrawing, Denial, or Non-continuance of the Divine Grace, then it follows, that when God does not continue his Grace, he is the Cause of Sin; not indeed the efficient Cause properly speaking, but the deficient Cause, as they phrase it.

Obj. 2.

Again they say, "That God is by no means oblig'd to Man, and therefore may, or may not grant him " Grace, as he thinks fit." To this we reply, (1.) That God is oblig'd to himself, to the Holiness and Equity of his own Nature. When he therefore requires Obedience under the Threatning of the severest Punishment, he is likewise bound in Justice and Equity to bestow on Man sufficient Abilities for the observing of the Law: Not because he is oblig'd to Man, but to the Equity and Rectitude of his own Nature. (2.) Whether God be tied up to any Law or not, yet this does not alter the Nature of Causality; he will still be the Cause of Sin. (3.) Tho not to do good be in Man a failure of his Duty, yet he could never be reputed guilty thereof, since by the Defect of Abilities the Performance of his Duty is render'd impossible.

Obj. 3.

Lastly, they tell us, "That Men for their Sins deserve to be abandon'd by God." To this we reply, (1.) That *Adam*, before his first Transgression, did not deserve it, and yet he fell notwithstanding, either by the Withdrawing or the Non-continuance of the Divine Grace,

Grace, according to them. (2.) God entered into a new Covenant with Men, wherein he promises that he will not remember their past Transgressions. (3.) Tho we should suppose that Men did deserve this Divine Desertion, yet it follows, that it would be the cause of all future Sins.

From all that has been said we may conclude, that no Permission ought to be ascribed to God, which introduces in any nature whatsoever, a Necessity of Sinning: But only such a Permission as not only allows Free-will to Man, but likewise a free Use of it; for Liberty when restrain'd from being us'd is no Liberty. To make a Man therefore truly the Cause of Sin, and justly liable to Punishment, 'tis necessary that no Divine Action should render Sin inevitable or impossible to be avoided by him.

Nor can we assent to their Opinion, who form such a Dependency of the Creatures upon God, which being admitted would render Sin necessary, and by no means to be avoided by Man. But whereas they imagine that their Notion is free from the Absurdities of the former Doctrine, it will not be amiss to examine it a little.

These Men lay down this as a Foundation, " That
 " all positive things are of God, and this either as
 " they are possible, or as they are transfer'd by God
 " from a State of Possibility to a State of Futurition.
 " Among the positive things, they reckon all the
 " Actions and Vertues of Men. But the Cause of Sin
 " according to them is not any thing positive, but some
 " defect, viz. the Abuse of the Free-will of the Creature:
 " Because Sin is not a real or positive thing, but a
 " mere Negation and *Non-Ens*. Its Possibility therefore
 " is not founded in the Power of God, but produc'd by a
 " free Cause; nay farther it precedes every
 " Decree of God, even that whereby he has made all
 " positive things to be possible. This Possibility being
 " suppos'd, it follows, that it can be neither repugnant
 " to the Justice, nor Goodness, nor Holiness of God,
 " to do something, in consequence of which the Commission
 " of Sin certainly follows. For this comes to pass,
 " because Sin was before possible; and it was possible,
 " because it was not repugnant to the Goodness,
 " Justice, and Holiness of God, to create a

The Permission of Sin leaves Man a Freedom Will, and free Use of it.

No such Dependency of Causes upon God, as to render Sin necessary.

The Principles of such a Dependency stated;

“ Creature not so perfect, but that he might sin.”

and refu-
d in all
e Bran-
es there-

As to the Foundation or Principle of this Opinion, which we have stated at large, viz. *That all positive Things are of God*; this is true if understood of Substances, and of the good Actions of Men, for they also are justly attributed to God as the Author of them: Not that any antecedent Decree made them pass from a State of Possibility to a State of Futurition, for that depends on the free and right Use of the Abilities God has granted to Men; but only so far as he grants Abilities of performing them, excites and moves Man to make a right Use thereof, without any prejudice to Man's Free-will, which may even resist this Divine Impulse.

As to what is premis'd, that all possible things proceed from the Decree of God, this cannot be admitted: For before any such Decree, things possible did exist, so far as no Repugnancy or Contradiction was implied in them, else they could not have been made possible by the Divine Decree.

What they add, that Sin is nothing, and therefore its Cause is not any positive Thing, but a Defect, viz. an Abuse of Free-will; and consequently that the Possibility of Sin arises from hence, that a Creature was not created so perfect, but he might abuse the Liberty of his Will: this is downright trifling. For what can be more childish than to assert that Sin is nothing? This may indeed in some sense be said of Sins of Omision; but with respect to those of Commission, I cannot imagine how they can be term'd nothing, since they consist of some positive Action contrary to the Command of God. What they say of the Cause of Sin, as being some Defect, this likewise falls to the ground. For 'tis not any Defect, but some positive and real thing which is the Cause of Sin. For tho the Liberty which is in Man, when compar'd with the Perfection of God, may be call'd an Imperfection, Defect, and the like; yet consider'd absolutely and in its own nature, it is something positive, and a Perfection.

But they go on; the Possibility of Sin being suppos'd, it follows, that it can be neither repugnant to the Goodness, nor Justice, nor Holiness of God, to do something, in consequence whereof the Commission of Sin certainly follows. But here we deny the
Conse-

Consequence. It is not indeed repugnant to the Divine Justice to create Man so as that he may sin, nay the very Nature of a free Obedience requires it should be so: But 'tis repugnant to it, for God to do any thing, in pursuance of which the Commission of Sin would necessarily follow: This neither the Justice, nor Holiness of God, nor the Law enacted by the threatning of Punishment allows of. Nay if this be suppos'd, God will be the only Cause of Sin; and I cannot see how, according to their Opinion, it can be avoided.

So that without wearying our Reader with any more Niceties of this nature, we may very fairly conclude, that all the foremention'd Opinions concerning God's Permission of Sin do amount to one and the same: That they do indeed differ in the manner of expressing themselves, but yet do all of them refer the Necessity of Sin to some Action of God; either to his actual determining and efficacious Permission; or to the withdrawing of the Divine Grace; or to the Production of a certain Order of second Causes, wherein Sin comes in for its share.

S E C T. III.

Some Places of Scripture consider'd, wherein the Efficiency of Sin seems to be ascribed to God.

Notwithstanding what has been urg'd in the foregoing Section, to prove that God is not the Author of Sin, yet several Texts of Scripture are produced, by which they pretend to evince, that 'tis through the efficacious Action of God, that Sin exists and is committed. These Texts may be reduc'd to three Heads; First such, wherein the Efficient Cause of Sin seems to be attributed to God: Secondly such, wherein God is said to blind the Eyes, and harden the Hearts of Men: And Thirdly such, wherein God is said to decree such things, from whence the Necessity of sinning is supposed to follow.

I. As to the first sort of Texts, wherein the Efficiency of Sin seems to be attributed to God, they are as follow: Prov. 16. 4. *The Lord hath made all things,*
ever

1. Places even the Wicked for the Day of Evil. If. 26. 12. Thou Lord, hast wrought all our Works in us. Eph. 1. 11. God worketh all things after the Counsel of his own Will. 2 Sam. 12. 11, 12. is foretold the Incest which Absalom should commit with his Father's Concubines, which we read was fulfill'd, 2 Sam. 16. 22. David likewise ascribes Shimei's cursing of him to God, 2 Sam. 16. 10. The Lord hath said, curse David; who shall then say, Wherefore hast thou done so? 2 Sam. 24. 1. And again the Anger of the Lord was kindled against Israel, and he moved David against them, to say, Go number Israel and Judah. 1 Kings 22. 19, 20, &c. and 2 Chron. 18. 16, 17, &c. God is said to send forth a lying Spirit to be in the Mouth of Ahab's Prophets, to persuade him to go up to Ramoth-Gilead to Battel, with a Promise of Success, tho they deceiv'd him, and he miscarried in that Enterprize.

Now what can be infer'd from these Places? Not that God was the Author or the Efficient Cause of Sin, this no Man dares assert: A softer Construction therefore must be put upon these Texts, which are not to be taken in a strict and literal Sense. And that the Efficiency of Sin is not ascribed to God in any of the foremention'd Passages will appear, if we take them into particular Examination.

Prov. 16. For in the first place, the three first Texts do not treat of Sins, as we have already prov'd concerning two of them, and shall now evince with respect to the third, viz. Prov. 16. 4. That by *All things* therefore which God is there said to have made, we are not to understand Sins, appears from hence; (1.) Because then it must be said that God is the Cause not only of Good things, but also of Evil things or Sins, even the most flagitious of them. (2.) Because God is said to have made all things *for himself*, i. e. for his own Glory; but the procuring or making of Sins, does not tend to the Glory, but rather to the Reproach of God. (3.) The Verb *לעשׂ* in this Place, signifies to do and make some thing with Affection and Energy. If therefore the Word *All things* includes Sins, God must be said not only to have made them, but likewise with some sort of Affection to have done them: And how this can be reconciled with what immediately follows,

Every

Every one that is proud in Heart, is an Abomination to the Lord, I cannot very well conceive. The Word *All things* then must be restrain'd to such only as can be the Effects of the Divine Operation, and does not include Sins.

As to 2 Sam. 24. 1. it is not said in the Original that 2 Sam. 2. God mov'd David to number the People; but a Verb ^{1. ex-} impersonal is us'd, and in the marginal Note of our *English* Bibles we read, instead of *He*, *Satan* mov'd David against them; according as 'tis said expressly in the Text of 1 Chron. 21. 1. So that the plain Meaning of that Place is this, that the Anger of the Lord was kindled against *Israel*; for *David* either by his own Ambition, or by the Incitement of the Devil was mov'd to number the People: by which Act he grievously offended the Lord, because he seem'd to be distrustful of his Providence; and therefore the Anger of God, which was already kindled against a sinful People, was rais'd by this Action into a Flame against them.

But thirdly as to 2 Sam. 12. 11, 12. and Chap. 16. 10. 2 Sam. 12. 11, 12. & Chap. 16. 10. God only is said to lay before Man an Occasion or Opportunity, which is very greedily laid hold on by the Sinner, by which means he bewrays the Wickedness of his Heart by some external Act of Sin. Thus *Absalom*, having got his Father's Concubines into his possession, committed Incest upon them by the Advice of his evil Counsellor *Achitophel*. True it is, God foretold *David* that he would give his Wives to his Neighbour, who should lie with them in the sight of the Sun, and accordingly we read that upon *David's* Flight his Concubines fell into the Hands of *Absalom*: Now the delivering of the Wives of that King into the Hands of his Son, was indeed by the Appointment and Permission of God, but the Commission of Incest was *Absalom's* own Act, and the Effect of his own wicked Heart. So likewise in the Case of *Shimei's* cursing *David*, God by that King's Flight gave that wicked Man an occasion of venting the Resentment and Malice he had hitherto stifled in his own Breast, and durst not shew it before for fear of the Power of *David*. So that *David's* saying that God commanded *Shimei* to curse him, is as much as if he had said, Behold now I am strip'd of my Regal Authority, and am as such by God expos'd to the Contempt

Contempt and Scorn of *Shimei*; he has no Power of mine to fear, therefore he may now rail at me without any apprehension of being punish'd. *David* by this Reply therefore humbles himself in the sight of God, ascribing all the Adversities he met with to the Divine Disposal, which had so directed these Events for his Punishment.

1 Kings
22. 22.
explain'd.

As to the last Place, viz. 1 Kings 22. 22. where an evil Spirit is said to be sent forth by God to be a lying Spirit in the Mouth of *Ahab's* Prophets; this was only a bare Permission of Divine Providence, which however did not include such a Necessity of sinning, as could not be resisted. For (1.) the Action to which God was willing to excite *Ahab*, was no Sin, but only the going up to *Ramoth-Gilead* to Battel against the King of *Syria*, in order to recover that Place which belong'd of Right to the Kingdom of *Israel*, and was detain'd contrary to Articles by the King of *Syria*. Nor (2.) was there any irresistible Force in the Means us'd to excite *Ahab* to undertake this War, but only a moral Prevalency of Persuasion, viz. the false Predictions of *Ahab's* Prophets, against which God oppos'd the Prediction of the true Prophet *Micaiah*, which might have had a greater Influence upon *Ahab* than all the rest.

2. Such
Scriptures
wherein God
is said to
blind and
harden
Men.

II. The second sort of Scriptures produc'd, are those wherein God is said to blind and harden Men. As to the Blinding of Men, this Passage is alledg'd, *Go and tell this People, Hear ye indeed, but understand not; and see ye indeed, but perceive not: Make the Heart of this People fat, and their Ears heavy, and shut their Eyes; lest they see with their Eyes, and hear with their Ears, and understand with their Heart, and convert and be heal'd*, Is. 6. 9, 10. As to the Hardning of Men, God says expressly that he will harden *Pharaoh's Heart*, Exod. 7. 3. So God is likewise said to harden the *Israelites Hearts in their Error*, Is. 63. 17. to give Men over to a *Reprobate Mind*; Rom. 1. 28. and to a strong Delusion that they should believe a Lye, 2 Thess. 2. 11.

A general
Solution of
them.

Now without entring into the Detail of these Texts, we shall only give this general Solution of them. First, That all these Places have respect to sinful Men, who by a long Course of Impenitence have deserv'd

the

the Divine Wrath; and to the penal Acts which God exercises towards such. No Inference therefore can be deduc'd from thence concerning the Providence of God with respect to Sin in general. Secondly, That when the Actions of Blinding, Hardning, and others of the like nature, are attributed to God, they do not imply any real Efficiency of spiritual Blindness, but only a certain penal Act which God exercises towards Sinners for the Offences they have committed. This is very evident from hence, that these Actions are not only ascrib'd to God, but likewise to Men, whom he makes use of in this his Action as his Instruments. Nothing else therefore is attributed to God, beside such a penal Action, which the Sinner by the Hardness of his Heart perversly lays hold of, and turns into an Occasion of Sinning. Now, who questions but that God may do this justly as a Punishment of past Sins, without being a Partaker in, or an efficient Cause of Sin?

III. The last kind of Texts which they produce, are those wherein God is said to have decreed some things, from which 'tis suppos'd that a Necessity of sinning follows.

The first of these Places is *Gen. 45. 5, 7. and Ch. 50. 20.* Where God is said to have sent *Joseph* into *Egypt*, to provide Food for his Brethren and their Families in the time of *Famine*: From whence they infer, that *Joseph's* Brethren sold him, and he was carry'd into *Egypt*, by the Appointment of God, to preserve them a Posterity in the Earth; according to what *Joseph* himself said, *It was not you that sent me hither, but God.* Answ. There is nothing in this Text which refers the Sin of *Joseph's* Brethren to any Divine Action: That which is only attributed to God, is his disposing of what they intended for the Destruction of their Brother, to his Good and Advancement, and to the Preservation of his Father's Family in the time of *Famine*. So that there is a great deal of difference between the Selling of *Joseph*, and his Advancement; the one being the Sin of his Brethren, in which God had no hand, and the other had God for its Director and Disposer.

Another Place alledg'd is *1 Sam. 2. 25.* They hear-ken'd not to the Voice of their Father, because the Lord would slay them. Answ. The Hebrew Particle *ו* does not

Gen. 45. 5, 7. & Ch. 50. 20 explain'd.

1 Sam. 2. 25. explain'd.

not necessarily signify *because*, but sometimes is render'd *therefore*: and then the Sense of the Words will be both pious, and worthy of God; *They did not hearken to the Voice of their Father, therefore the Lord would slay them.*

Acts 4.
7, 28.
plain'd.

The third and last Place is *Acts* 4. 27, 28. where the Apostles in their Prayer to God say, *Of a truth against thy Holy Child Jesus, whom thou hast anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles and the People of Israel, were gather'd together, for to do whatsoever thy Hand and thy Counsel determin'd before to be done.*

Ans. (1.) This Place does not treat of the Death of *Jesus Christ*, and of the wicked Counsel of *Pilate, Herod*, and the *Jews*, as to the killing of him, as if all these things were predestinated by the Divine Decree, for our Lord *Jesus Christ* was crucify'd long before: But it treats only of that which happen'd at that time to the Apostles and the Christian Church; who being the Disciples of *Jesus*, whatever Attempt was made upon them might very reasonably be said to be made against *Christ* himself as their Head. (2.) It is not said that God decreed that *Pilate, Herod*, &c. should do what they did, but at most, that they did what God had decreed to be done. (3.) This Text with a small Transposition of Words, very common in Holy Writ, may be so read as to contain in them a Sense quite different from what is commonly attributed to them. For the Place may be read thus: *Both Herod and Pontius Pilate with the Gentiles and the People of Israel were gather'd together against thy Holy Child Jesus, whom thou hast anointed to do whatsoever thy Hand and thy Counsel determin'd before to be done.* If this reading of the Words be admitted, then the Meaning of them is plainly this, that *Herod and Pontius Pilate* did not meet together to do whatsoever the Hand and Counsel of God had decreed to be done, but that God the Father anointed his Son *Jesus* to do whatsoever his Hand and Counsel had determin'd to be done.

Upon the whole matter we see that no Text of Scripture can be brought, wherein such an Action can be imputed to God, from which Sin is a necessary Consequence.

S E C T. IV.

*Of the Providence of God with respect to Sin At,
and After its Commission.*

The Acts of Divine Providence with respect to Sin At its Commission are two, *Direction* and *Determination*. *Direction* is that Act whereby God disposes Sinners contrary to their Intention to do what they never intended to do. And this he does by directing their Actions to some other Object, or to some other End than they design'd. Of the former of these we have an Instance in the King of *Assyria*, who being uncertain whether he should fall upon the *Ammonites* or the *Jews*, at last was directed to turn his Arms upon the *Jews*.

The Direction of Divine Providence with respect to Sin at its Commission.

And of the latter we have Instances in *Joseph's* Brethren, who by selling him thought to put a stop to his Advancement, whilst God by that means brought him to that Honour to which he had design'd him: In *Herod's* murdering the Infants with an intention to destroy the Child *Jesus*, which God so directed as to render the Birth of our Saviour the more notorious. Thus likewise the Persecutions which Tyrants rais'd against the Church in order to destroy it, were turn'd by God to its Good, either as a Trial of Faith, or as a Chastisement of Sin, or for the Examples of others.

The Determination of Divine Providence with respect to Sin at its Commission, is that whereby God does in some measure set Bounds to his Permission, that so Sinners may not execute all that they intend to do: But he restrains them within certain Limits, which they cannot pass, so that they cannot commit Sin before, or any greater, or any longer, than God is pleas'd to permit. Of all these we have an Instance (to pass by others) in *Jab*, whom the Devil could not afflict before God permitted him: and this Divine Permission kept him within certain Bounds; as first, that he should touch his Estate, but not injure his Body; then that he should afflict his Body, but not rob him of his Life; and lastly he put an end to the Affliction,

The Determination of it in that respect.

fiction, by restoring *Job*, after he had been tried, to a greater Prosperity than ever he enjoyed.

The Acts of it with respect to Sin after its Commission.

The Acts of Divine Providence with respect to Sin, After it is committed, are several. (1.) A Directing of it to a good End, contrary to the Intention of him who commits it: As was the selling of *Joseph*, for the preservation of *Jacob's* Family, and the whole Kingdom of *Egypt*; the Incest of *Absalom*, for the Punishment of *David's* Adultery; the crucifying of our Saviour, for the Redemption of all Mankind. (2.) Punishing of it, whereby God inflicts a just Punishment upon it, either Temporal or Eternal, according to its Demerit, and as he thinks fit. (3.) Remission of the Guilt of Sin, and not inflicting of Punishment; whereby God deals graciously with a penitent Sinner, and rewards him according to the Abundance of his Mercy, as if he had been no Sinner.

C H A P. XI.

Of the various Methods of Divine Providence.

Methods of Providence various;

THE Methods of Divine Providence are various, both with respect to the Quantity and the Quality of its Objects.

I. With respect to the Quantity of its Objects.

With respect to the *Quantity* of its Objects: (1.) The Providence of God is different according to the Inequality in the Worth of things; thus he takes more care of Men than of Beasts and Plants. (2.) By virtue of his own Free-will and Pleasure he does not reveal himself alike to all; to some he does it only by his Works of Creation and Universal Providence, whilst to others he is pleas'd to make a gracious Declaration of his Will. (3.) God has a greater Love for Actions morally good; than for mere Persons; for the Actions are not grateful to God for the sake of the Person, but the Person for the sake of the Actions. (4.) He has a greater kindness for the Pious than the Impious; hence it is that he hears the Prayers of the one, whilst those of

of the other (so long as they continue impenitent) are an Abomination to him: And hence it is that he bestows more and larger Gifts of Grace upon the former, than on the latter. (5.) He bears a greater Hatred towards such as sin against the Conviction of Conscience, and the Light of Scripture, than against those who fall out of Ignorance or Infirmary.

With respect to the *Quality* of its Objects, the Divine Providence likewise varies. As (1.) for the producing, preventing or directing of some Objects, God is pleas'd sometimes to make use of his Omnipotency, and sometimes he applies such a Concurrence and Assistance, as is agreeable to the things, and suitable to our Nature. (2.) It differs with respect to the Difference of Time; and thus it was different under the Law from what it is under the Gospel-Dispensation. (3.) The Divine Providence is either immediate, whereby God acts in the Government of the World, without any intervening Instruments: or else mediate, when God in any of his Operations makes use of second Causes, as Instruments of Action. (4.) The Providence of God is either ordinary; when he governs all things according to their Natures and Powers given them at their Creation: or extraordinary, when he does not observe that Order, but either puts a stop to it for the Punishment of Sin; or else works Miracles which are above the Power, and sometimes contrary to the regular Course of Nature.

From what has been hitherto said, 'tis plain, that all created Beings are under the Government of the most wise Providence of God, and that nothing happens fortuitously or by chance, but by the Efficiency, Permission, or Direction of God; who inspects and knows all things, in order to render to every Man according to his Works, and to make all things subservient to his Glory, whether he does good, or permits evil to be done, whether he rewards the Godly, or punishes the Ungodly.

C H A P. XII.

*An Answer to some Objections against the
Divine Providence.*

Objections
inst Di-
e Pro-
vidence.

BEfore we make an end of this Subject, it will not be amiss to answer some Objections usually brought against Divine Providence, the principal of which are these: First, that it often happens that good Men are afflicted in this World. Secondly, That the Wicked are often successful and prosperous: And thirdly, that the Innocent are often involv'd in the same Calamities with the Guilty. All which seem to argue that God's Providence is not concern'd about Human Affairs.

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For a general Reply to these Objections, we say, (1.) That we are not infallible Judges of the Goodness and Piety of another, since he may by a false Semblance cover the Impiety of his Heart; and only God, who is the Searcher of Hearts, can know what is in the Mind of Man. (2.) That several Evils, which happen to the Good, are only Physical Evils, which affect the Body and not the Mind; and therefore are not real Evils, since their Contraries are not real Goods, but often prove a Snare, and an Occasion of falling.

answer'd
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Having premis'd thus much in general, we may in particular assert, (1) That the Misfortunes which happen to the Good, are sent to them by the wise Counsel of God, not as real Evils, but as a Trial of their Faith and Patience, and to render their Vertues the more illustrious; and in this respect they have the Nature of Good, especially considering that *those light Afflictions and Chastisements which are but for a moment, will work out for them a far more exceeding and eternal Weight of Glory*: And that they are *not to be compar'd to the Glory that shall hereafter be reveal'd in them*. (2.) That the Good things which fall to the share of the Wicked in this Life are not really such; nor are they any farther Marks of the Divine Favour,
than

than as they lead Men to Repentance. Nay it frequently happens that an Affluence of those Temporal Good things tends to harden them in their Impiety; and after all their Enjoyments, they are in the other World, if they die impenitent, consign'd over to Everlasting Punishment: which is an Over-balance to all their Good things in this Life, and may sufficiently justify the Wisdom and Justice of Divine Providence.

(3.) As to the last Objection, *viz.* That the Innocent are often involv'd in the same Calamities with the Guilty, we think fit to premise: First, that to kill, and to punish are two different things; the former being an Act of the Sovereignty of God, in whose hands are lodg'd the Issues of Life and Death; and the latter being an Act of Judgment, which always infers a relation to Guilt. Secondly, That there is a difference betwixt a Man's being punish'd for the Sin of another wherein he had no share or hand, and his being punish'd as altogether Guiltless and Innocent. These things being premis'd, we assert, that the Innocent are never punish'd by God; that tho they may be cut off with the Wicked, yet this is no Demonstration of the Divine Displeasure against the Guiltless, but rather an Aggravation of the Punishment of the Guilty. That this is true in all the Instances of this nature recorded in Scripture, will appear to every impartial Reader, who cannot but say upon serious Thoughts, *Righteous, O Lord, art thou, and just are thy Judgments.*

After all, God is so far from punishing the Innocent for the sake of the Guilty, that he has shew'd himself inclinable to spare the Wicked for the sake of the Righteous, as in the Case of *Sodom* and *Gomorrhah*, wherein if there had been but ten righteous Persons, God declar'd that he *would have spared those Cities for their sakes*¹. And when God at any time decreed to cut off the Wicked, he has sometimes deliver'd the Righteous who liv'd among them from that Destruction, either by admonishing them to fly from that wicked Generation²; or by directing them to means where-

¹ Gen. 18. 32. See likewise 1 Kings 11. 12, 13. 2 Kings 3. 14. Rom. 11. 28. ² Jer. 51. 6. Rev. 18. 4.

by they might be saved, as he directed *Noah* to build an Ark¹; or by delivering them by his Angels, as *Lot* was²; or by granting them Favour in the sight of their Enemies, as was the Case of *Jeremiah*³; or lastly by taking the Righteous out of this World, that they might sleep in peace, and not be partakers of the general Calamity, in which sense we are to understand those Words of the Prophet, *The Righteous is taken away from the Evil to come*⁴, and of which we have Instances in *Jeroboam's Son*⁵, and in King *Josiah*⁶.

¹ Gen. 6. ² Gen. 19. ³ Jer. 39. 11, 12. Ch. 40. 4, 5.
⁴ Is. 57. 1. ⁵ 1 Kings 14. 12, 13. ⁶ 2 Chron. 34. 27, 28.

BOOK

BOOK III.

Of REDEMPTION.

CHAP. I.

*Of Redemption, and the Occasion of it,
Man's Misery.*

THE Work of Redemption is not distinct from *The W* that of Divine Providence, but is only a cer- *of Rede*
tain Method and Dispensation thereof, accor- *tion co*
ding to which it pleases God to govern the *der'd.*
World in these last times. But for as much as we are to
treat of the Christian Religion, 'tis necessary to insist
more particularly on this extraordinary Work of Di-
vine Providence, on which the whole of our Religion
depends. For 'tis by this Dispensation that he has laid
new and greater Obligations upon Men to worship and
serve him, than ever he did by his Acts of Creation
and Providence.

Redemption then is a Work of Divine Grace, where- *Its Dej*
by God took compassion of Men that were subject to *nition.*
his Wrath and Death by reason of their Sins, sending
his Son Jesus Christ to be their Redeemer, who should
reconcile them by his Death and Blood to his Father,
govern them by his Word as with a Spiritual Scepter,
and by his Almighty Power bring them to Everlasting
Life and the Happiness of Heaven.

The Excellency of this Dispensation appears from *Its Exc*
hence, that God had fore-ordain'd it before the Foun- *lency.*
dation of the World'; and that he not only foretold

it at several Times, first obscurely and then more clearly, but the whole Oeconomy of God under the Old Testament shadowed it out to us. The Predictions not only tell us of the Advent of our Saviour, but are particular in all the Circumstances of his Coming, informing us of the Family of which he should (according to the Flesh) descend, of the Time and Place of his Birth, with the like. And then the Types and Figures which shadow out this Redeemer to us, do exactly represent and cannot agree with any other Person whatsoever, but only their great Antitype, the Lord Jesus Christ, whom we look upon to be the Saviour of the World, and in whom they were all fulfilled. For when the Fulness of time was come, that is, when all the Prophecies and Types relating to our Saviour were ready to be fulfilled, God sent forth his Son, made of a Woman, made under the Law, to redeem them that were under the Law, that we might receive the Adoption of Sons, *Gal. 4. 4, 5.*

But that we may the more distinctly explain this Work of Redemption, we shall in this and the following Chapters consider these things: First, the Occasion of it; Secondly, the impulsive or moving Cause thereof; Thirdly, the Instrument, or Redeemer, by whose Mediation God work'd out this Redemption; Fourthly, the Work of Redemption it self.

The Occasion of Redemption was the extreme Misery of Mankind: concerning which we shall treat, (1.) Of its Nature; (2.) Of its Greatness; (3.) Of its Original: And (4.) we shall shew that Men could not be deliver'd from it by any other Method but this of Redemption, by which will appear the Necessity thereof.

S E C T. I.

Of the Nature and Greatness of Mankind's Misery.

Nature of the Misery of Mankind. In the first place, as to the Nature of the Misery of Mankind, it is two-fold, Sin and Death. The former was Sin, or a Slavery thereto, consisting in a Habit or Custom of Sinning by many and repeated Acts of one or

or more Sins: And how grievous a Servitude and Misery this is, the Scripture does abundantly evince, by reckoning it next to impossible for a Man to free himself from an inveterate Habit of Sinning¹. Add to this, the pernicious Consequence of such a Custom, for thereby the Understanding is darken'd, the Will corrupted, the Affections deprav'd, and the whole Man is out of Frame. Now what greater Misery can there be, than for a Man to be thus a Slave to his Lusts, to drag continually along with him, like a condemn'd Malefactor, the heavy Chains of Guilt and Shame, of Horror and Despair? But the Misery of Man does not rest here, he is consign'd over for his Sins to a fatal Necessity of dying; and if he dies impenitent, he is condemn'd to an Eternal Separation from God, and will be cast into Everlasting Fire, prepar'd for the Devil and his Angels. And how great, how unspeakable a Misery must this needs be!

But then secondly, as to the Greatness or Extent *The G* of this Misery, the Scripture tells us that 'tis Univer- *ness of* sal, and extends to all Men: In that all, both *Jews and being* *Greeks*, have sinned and fallen short of the Glory of *versal* God, and are guilty in his sight, and consequently subject to this Misery. Nor were *David, Asa, Josiah, Cornelius, Lydia* and others, of whom we read that they walk'd blameless before God, that they sought him with their whole Heart, and that they fear'd him; these Persons, I say, were not altogether exempt from this Misery. They were not indeed profane and profligate in their Lives, but still some Defects were attributed to them; *David* was charg'd with Murder and Adultery, *Asa* committed the Prophet *Hanani* to prison; *Josiah* is said to return unto the Lord, from whom 'tis probable that he had before departed; and *Cornelius* and *Lydia* wanted the Knowledge of those things that were necessary to their Salvation.

As to Children born of Christian Parents, who are *The C* from their tender years instructed in the Christian *Childr* Religion; tho we dare not place them in the same rank *born of* with the Children of *Gentile* Parents, yet it must be *Christ.* *Paren*

own'd that they would have been in the same State and Condition, had not God let in the Light of the Gospel upon their Parents; so that their being born and educated in a better State, is wholly owing to the Divine Favour. However, 'tis plain to all who know any thing of the Education of Christian Children, that they are not educated so innocent as to be free from all actual Guilt; but that notwithstanding all the Care taken of them, they contract evil Habits, and are led by them till such time as they can make use of their Reason, and follow the Dictates of the Word of God.

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The Case is quite different with respect to Children who die in their Infancy; for they cannot properly be said to be guilty of any Sin. However, to Death they are subject, as deriv'd from their first Parent *Adam*, from which they cannot be freed but by Christ the Redeemer, without whom they would lie for ever under the Condemnation of Death. So that 'tis plain, this Misery is common to all Men, and that all without exception stand in need of a Redeemer.

S E C T. II.

Of the Original of Mankind's Misery, and First of the Sin of our First Parents, and the Punishment thereof.

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The Original of this twofold Misery is every Man's own fault, or his Free-will, whereby he casts himself wilfully into this Misery. To illustrate this, we will consider, First, how Sin came into the World, and then how it came to be propagated among all Men. Of the former of these we will treat in this Section, and of the latter in the next.

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t given
our first
rents.*

When Man was created, God prescrib'd him a positive Law, viz. not to eat of the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil. The Scripture is silent as to the reason of this Prohibition, tho' 'tis very probable that God intended it as a Trial of *Adam's* Obedience. The Equity of which Precept appears from hence, that God gave *Adam* the free Use of all the other Trees, this only

ly excepted. So that he could not be charg'd with envying Man's Happiness, as the Devil suggested to our first Parents. But that *Adam* might not transgress this Precept, God back'd it with this Threatning, *In the Day thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die.* But here it may be ask'd, what is the meaning of this Threatning, and what God understood by Death in this place? Some Divines considering that Death is taken in Scripture in a threefold Sense, either to denote a Natural Death, or a Separation of the Soul from the Body; or a Spiritual Death, which consists in a Man's Incapacity of doing that which is Good; or Eternal Death, which consists in throwing both Soul and Body into Hell-fire; do suppose all these are comprehended in the word *Death*. But to wave the Disquisition of this matter, we for our parts say, that by Death in this place is meant only a Separation of the Soul from the Body, or a necessary Death, to which Man should arrive by various Miseries: So that Man being turn'd out of a State of Immortality, should be liable to a necessary Death.

But here it may be ask'd, whether God did not likewise enact this Precept upon the Promise of an everlasting and Heavenly Life? *Ans.* We believe that *Adam*, if he had not sin'd, would never have died; for Death is the Punishment of Sin, and by Sin Death enter'd into the World'. We believe farther, that God upon a sufficient Trial of *Adam's* Obedience, would have translated him to a Heavenly Life without the intervention of Death: However, he made no Promise of this to Man, but it would have been an Act of his Free-grace. For there is no mention made in Scripture of any such Promise, we only read of the Threatning.

To this there may several Objections be started, which we shall briefly set down, and as briefly answer.

First, it may be said, "That under the Threatning of Death, if Man transgress'd the Commandment, is tacitly comprehended the Promise of Eternal Life, if he had continu'd Innocent." *Ans.* This does by

This Promise not enacted the Promise of Eternal Life.

Objection answer'd Obj. 1.

no means follow; it follows indeed, that Man would not have died, but not that God was oblig'd by any such Promise made to Man, much less of translating him to the Joys of Heaven.

2. Secondly, it may be urg'd, "Tho no mention is made in Scripture of such a Promise, yet it does not follow, that none such was made by God: For neither do we there read of any Prohibition of Lying, Perjury, &c. nor of the Threatning of Everlasting Death made both to *Adam* and his Posterity." *Answ.* (1.) We do not pretend to conclude from thence, that God made no such Promise, but only that it does not appear to us that there was any such thing, and therefore we cannot affirm any thing for certain about it. (2.) It does not appear that Lying and Perjury were forbidden to our first Parent; nor was it necessary, since Reason alone was sufficient to keep him in his Duty, whilst in a State of Innocence. As to what they add concerning the Threatning of Eternal Death to *Adam* and his Posterity, 'tis worth our while to observe, that if there be no mention made in Scripture of any such Threatning, then what some Men teach about it is a mere Fiction of their own Brain.

3. Thirdly, they object farther, "That Christ died to restore to us what we lost in *Adam*; since therefore by Christ we attain Eternal Life, we lost it in *Adam*." *Answ.* 'Tis no where said that Christ came only for that end: Much more noble things are attributed to him in Scripture, viz. That he came to free us from our own Sins, and from the Punishment due to them, and to render us partakers of Eternal Life.

4. Fourthly, 'tis said, "That the Tree of Life was a Sacrament sealing to us the Promise of Eternal Life." *Answ.* How does this appear? This Tree had indeed a faculty of preserving Man's Life, and therefore was call'd the Tree of Life. It may likewise be said to be a Figure or Type of Everlasting Life, but we nowhere find it call'd the Sacrament of the Promise of Eternal Life.

5. Fifthly, they say, "That God gave us an Example in *Enoch* and *Elijah*; what would have happen'd to *Adam* if he had not sinned." *Answ.* This is very true, however it does not from hence appear that there was any

any Promise made of Eternal Life. For (1.) *Adam* knew nothing of what would happen to those Men, who were to live after his Decease. Nor (2.) was there any Promise added to those Instances.

Lastly they urge, "That this is very evident from *Obj. 6.*
 " the Promises of Eternal Life, so often made in
 " Scripture to the fulfilling of the Law"; and hence
 " it is that the Commandment is said to be *ordain'd*
 " *to Life*": Which chiefly holds good before the Fall,
 " when Man was plac'd under the Law." *Ans.* There
 are many things suppos'd in this Argument, which are
 false, or at least uncertain: As (1.) that God made
 a Covenant at first with Man, wherein he prescribed to
 him a Law of Works, which requir'd the Observation
 of all the Moral Precepts, and all manner of Perfec-
 tion both of the Human Nature and its Actions; where-
 as we have before observ'd that no other but a positive
 Law of not eating the forbidden Fruit was given to
 Man, whose Sin evidently consisted in the sole Trans-
 gression thereof. (2.) That God annex'd the Promise
 of Eternal Life to that Law, of which we find no men-
 tion made in Scripture. Nor can it with any colour of
 Reason be infer'd from the Promises of Eternal Life
 made afterwards by God, obscurely at first under the
 Law, and then more clearly under the Gospel-Dispen-
 sation, that this Promise was made to the first Man in
 Paradise.

But not to insist any farther on this matter, 'tis plain *Man sin'd*
 that Man by the Seducement of the Devil transgress'd *by the Se-*
 this positive Law, and by this Transgression fell from *duccment*
 his primitive State of Innocence. 'Tis said indeed *of the De-*
 that *the Serpent beguiled Eve, and she did eat of the for-*
bidden Fruit; but that Satan was the Tempter under *vil.*
 the shape of a Serpent appears from *Rev. 12. 9.* where
 he is stiled the *great Dragon, that old Serpent*, called
 the *Devil and Satan*, which deceiveth the whole
 World; alluding doubtless to the History of the Fall
 of Man. The Scripture is silent as to the Motive which
 excited the Devil to deceive Men; but 'tis very likely

¹ Matt. 19. 16, 17. Lev. 18. 5. Ezek. 20. 11. Gal. 3. 12.
² Rom. 7. 10.

that *Envy* prompted him to it, being unwilling that the New Creature *MAN* should be so happy, whilst he was plung'd into the Abyss of Misery. Envyng therefore the Happiness of *MAN K I N D*, he endeavour'd by this Act to render them as miserable as himself. To this purpose he made use of the most probable Methods of beguiling our first Parents: His first Attempt was upon the weaker Vessel *Eve*, who being tempted, won upon her Husband to be Partner with her both in Guilt and Misery. The Devil likewise allur'd them with the Promise and Hopes of a Good which they were not in possession of, which must needs have been a great Enticement, considering that the Nature of Man is such, as to be soon cloy'd with the present, but to reach out still after a future Good. God had threaten'd them with Death if they should eat of the Tree of Knowledg; but the Devil tells them, *Ye shall not surely die; in the Day ye eat thereof, then your Eyes shall be open'd, and ye shall be as Gods knowing Good and Evil.* The Hopes then of enjoying a Good they had never yet experienc'd, viz. a Knowledg of Good and Evil, and the charming Aspect of the forbidden Fruit, which was fair to look upon, &c. was the reason why our first Parents yielded so easily to the Temptation of the Devil, and fell into Sin.

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mitted
wilfully.

From what has been said, 'tis plain, that our first Parents wilfully and freely transgress'd the Command of God, to which they were not determin'd nor necessitated by any internal or external Force, or by any other Method. For there was not such an irresistible Power in the Allurements of the Devil as to drag Man into the Commission of Sin; since his Assertion, *ye shall not die*, was against the express Word of God. Nor should the Beautifulnes of the Fruit, or the Desire of Knowledg have been more prevalent than the Divine Precept and the Denunciation of Death; and the Temptation of the one could not have outweigh'd the Consideration of the other, had not Man wilfully gave the loose to his Concupiscence. Besides, since this Sin rob'd Man of his primitive Happiness, and subjected him to a necessary Death, it ought more especially to have been free in its Commission; for had it been otherwise, it would not, properly speaking, have been a Fault,

Fault, nor would the Commission of it have made Man liable to be punish'd.

All Divines in general agree with us in this, that *Adam's* Transgression was wilful: But some of them differ so much in the Notion of the Nature of this Liberty, that whilst in words they seem to ascribe the Freedom of sinning to *Adam*, yet in effect they rob him thereof, and lay him under a fatal Necessity of sinning. Of this nature are those, who maintain that God decreed from all Eternity to extend his Mercy towards some, but to exercise his Justice upon others: And in order to this, he likewise decreed that the first Man, and in him all Men, should fall into Sin. But by this means the Divine Decree lays *Adam* under a Necessity of sinning, and consequently he is acquitted of all the Guilt, which is cast upon God as the Cause of this, and all the Sins consequent thereupon: which is abominable and blasphemous to assert.

Others, to avoid this ill Consequence, maintain, *Other Ob*
 " That the Sin of our first Parent consider'd in its own *jections a*
 " Nature was free and wilful, but with respect to the *swer'd.*
 " Divine Prescience it was necessary; but that this is on- *Obj. 1.*
 " ly a Necessity of Consequence, which may very well
 " consist with the Freedom of Man's Will." *Ans.*

This might be granted, if those Doctors would acknowledge, that God can foreknow future Contingencies, which really are such, and which depend upon Man's Free-will: But since they deny this, and tell us that God in order to foreknow future Contingencies does determine them by his Decree on one side; I cannot imagine, upon the supposition of such a Divine Prescience, how they can allow any manner of Liberty of sinning to our first Parent. For tho by their Concession, the Will of Man be free in its own Nature, yet when annex'd to the Divine Decree, and determin'd by it to this rather than to that, it cannot in any sense be said to be free.

'Tis said by others, " That *Adam* had Grace given *Obj. 2.*
 " him to remain in a State of Innocence if he would,
 " but not to persevere therein; and because he had not
 " the Grace of Perseverance granted to him, therefore
 " it happen'd that he fell so easily." *Ans.* 'Tis plain
 that these Men lie under the same Difficulty with the
 former.

former. For (1.) upon the supposition of this Grace, it was in *Adam's* power to maintain his Integrity, or it was not: If not, how can it be said that he had Grace given him to maintain it? But if it were in his power, then he might have abstain'd from sinning, tho the Grace of perseverance had not been granted unto him. But (2.) this Grace of Perseverance not granted to *Adam* was either necessary for the maintaining his Innocence, or not: If not, then tho the one were not granted, he might have maintain'd the other; which they look upon to be absurd. If it were necessary, then it was so for his Perseverance in his Integrity.

*Pu-
ment of
first
ents* But not to enlarge on these Speculations, 'tis enough to observe, that upon the Commission of this Sin, Man immediately incur'd the Punishment threatned him by God. *Eve*, who was the first in the Transgression, had a two-fold Punishment inflicted upon her, *viz.* Painful Child-bearing, and Subjection to her Husband: As for *Adam*, he met with various Troubles and Crosses; the Earth which brought forth Fruit of it self, was curs'd for his sake, and Briers and Thorns were the Product thereof instead of the Sweets of Paradise, and he was condemn'd to get his Bread by the Sweat of his his Brows. But both the Man and the Woman suffer'd alike a far greater Punishment, *viz.* Death, to which was annex'd a Deprivation of their primitive Happiness, their being driven out of Paradise, and separated from the Tree of Life.

*Query
wer'd.* Here it may be ask'd, whether *Adam* by his Transgression contracted an Incapacity of doing any Good for the future? To this we reply, that *Adam* did indeed lose his Original Righteousness (as they term it) or rather did fall from a State of Innocence and Integrity into a State of Sin: Nay farther, that *Adam* after his first Transgression was more inclin'd to Evil, and to lust after things Unlawful than before. However we do not believe that *Adam* contracted an Incapacity of doing any Good for the future, since the Act of Sin does not take away the Power of doing the contrary. Add to this, that if there had been such an Inability in *Adam*, none but God could have been the Cause of it, who punish'd *Adam* for his Sin, with this Incapacity of doing any future Good: But to suppose this, would be

be absurd, if not blasphemous; especially if we consider that God gave Man, after the Fall, Hopes of Pardon, and requir'd Obedience of him for the future, which he would not have done had *Adam* by his first Transgression been render'd incapable of doing any future Good.

S E C T. III.

Of the Effects which Adam's first Transgression had upon his Posterity; and first of the Imputation thereof.

Adam, as being the common Parent of all Mankind, expos'd all his Posterity to the same Miseries to which himself was liable. For 'tis not to be suppos'd that *Adam's* Sin had no effect but upon himself alone, which is said to be the Error of *Pelagius*: But all the Miseries into which he fell by his Sin, are entail'd upon his Posterity. For they are all excluded from the Terrestrial Paradise, as well as *Adam* and *Eve*: The Women bring forth Children with Pain, and are subject to their Husbands, even the most morose; and Men eat their Bread with the Sweat of their Brows; and all are subject to the same Fate, *viz.* Death. However this Death is not to be look'd upon as properly a Punishment inflicted on *Adam's* Posterity; for 'tis impossible that the Innocent should be punish'd for another's Offence; but it is only a natural Necessity of dying, deriv'd from *Adam* on whom it was inflicted as a Punishment.

The Effects of Adam's Transgression on his Posterity.

And this Death, as in *Adam*, is in its own Nature Eternal, from which none can be exempted by any Vertue of their own, but only by our Lord Jesus Christ; for by Grace they are to be saved.

Death in it self Eternal.

As to Eternal Torments, so manifestly denounc'd against the Impenitent in the Gospel, we have already evinc'd that they are not comprehended under the Threatning made to *Adam*. As therefore *Adam* by his first Transgression was not liable to their Guilt; so likewise he cannot be said to transmit his Guilt to his Posterity. However we do not by any means infer that all the Wicked, who sin without the knowledge of the Gospel,

pel, shall remain under Everlasting Death without any Resurrection to a future Punishment; but all that we contend for is, that this Punishment was not the Effect of *Adam's* Transgression.

Query
answer'd.

But here it may be ask'd, whether there be not any Original Sin, with which all Men are tainted at their Birth? In answer to this we say, that the Phrase *Original Sin* is no where to be met with in Scripture; and it is likewise very improper, since it cannot properly be said that Sin which is voluntary, is innate to us. But if by *Original Sin* they mean the Misfortune which happen'd to Mankind upon *Adam's* Transgression, we very readily grant it, tho it cannot in any proper sense be said to be Sin. We likewise own that Infants are born in a less degree of Purity than *Adam* was created, and have a certain Inclination to Sin, which they deriv'd not from *Adam*, but from their next immediate Parents.

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School-
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ginal Sin
futed.

Having thus briefly explain'd our Opinion concerning *Original Sin*, it remains that we should enquire in- to the Opinions of others about it, which are various. The *Schoolmen* commonly define it to be a want of Original Righteousness which ought to be in Man. But we have already shewn, that there was no such supernatural Gift granted to Men upon their Creation, and that the Image of God did not consist therein, but in the Dominion which Man had over the rest of the Creatures. Nor properly speaking were our first Parents created Holy, but only innocent and upright. So far indeed they had an Original Righteousness in them, as they were oblig'd to maintain themselves in the same State wherein they were, but their Posterity were not bound to have that supernatural Gift which *Adam* had lost.

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sts Opini-
about it.

Others maintain, that *Original Sin* is that actual Transgression of *Adam* and *Eve* imputed to their Posterity; others that 'tis an hereditary Corruption of all the Faculties of the Soul deriv'd from *Adam's* first Sin. For they tell us, that after the Commission of actual Sin, it became habitual to *Adam*; that is, his Will and Affections were corrupted, and his whole Man inclin'd to Sin: And that this Corruption was transmitted by *Adam* to his Posterity, so that all Men are

are born with this Infection upon them, being averſe to all Good, and prone to all Evil. And the Maintainers of this Opinion add, that they do not deny the Imputation of *Adam's* Tranſgreſſion, but diſtinguiſh between an Antecedent and Conſequential Imputation. The one, according to them, is That whereby God imputes the Sin of our firſt Parents to their Poſterity, and for that reaſon cauſes them to be born with an Original Corruption: The other is That whereby God imputes *Adam's* firſt Tranſgreſſion to his Poſterity, becauſe they are born with that habitual Corruption; that is, puniſhes them with the ſame Punishment which *Adam* had contracted by his firſt Sin. So that this Imputation, properly ſpeaking, is nothing but the Punishment of Original Corruption. The latter of theſe they allow of, but reject the former.

As to the Punishment of Original Sin, Divines differ alſo about it: For the *Schoolmen* maintain that it merits the Punishment of Loſs; whiſt others, *viz.* the *Calviniſts*, ſay it merits the Eternal Punishment of Senſe, ſo that many Children dying in their Infancy are to be caſt into Hell, and tormented eternally for this ſingle Tranſgreſſion. We will examine theſe Opinions more diſtinctly, ſince they are the Foundation of the Doctrine which relates to Abſolute Predeſtination.

And firſt, as to the Imputation of *Adam's* Sin, whereby 'tis maintain'd that God has ſo imputed our firſt Parents Tranſgreſſion to all their Poſterity, that it becomes the Sin of all, and all have ſin'd in *Adam*, and for that reaſon are liable to Eternal Death and Damnation; we ſhall endeavour to ſhew the contrary by the following Arguments. (1.) There is no mention made of this Imputation, either in the Threatning made to *Adam*, or in the Execution of the Sentence againſt him. Therefore it is in vain to deduce it from other Texts, which treat of another Subject: For here, if any where, had been the true and proper Place for treating of it. (2.) God pardon'd *Adam* and *Eve* for that Sin which they had committed in their own Perſons, and by their own Free-will, as all Divines infer from the Promise made by God, *that the Seed of the Woman ſhould bruise the Serpent's Head*, Gen. 3. 16. Therefore he does not impute it to their Poſterity.

For it would be the highest Cruelty to pardon the Guilty who had committed the Sin, and impute it to, and punish it in his Posterity, who neither were nor could be conscious of it. (3.) God says expressly of himself, that he does not impute the Sins of the Parents to their Children¹: For after he had blamed the Jews for saying, *The Fathers have eaten sour Grapes, and the Childrens Teeth are set on edge*; he says, *That there should be no occasion of using that Proverb any more in Israel*; and adds, ²*The Soul that sinneth, it shall die; the Son shall not bear the Iniquity of the Father, neither shall the Father bear the Iniquity of the Son; the Righteousness of the Righteous shall be upon him, and the Wickedness of the Wicked shall be upon him.* Accordingly 'tis expressly said in the Law, ³*The Fathers shall not be put to death for the Children, nor shall the Children be put to death for the Fathers, every Man shall be put to death for his own Sin.* (4.) God will render to every Man according to his Works, and according to what he hath done in the Body, whether it be good or bad⁴: He does not therefore impute Adam's Sin to his Posterity; for suppose them to be Partakers of it in any manner whatsoever, yet it cannot be said that they committed this Sin in their own Body.

Rom. 5. 17. To the Arguments we have offer'd they commonly explain'd. object the words of the Apostle, *Rom. 5. 12. As by one Man Sin entred into the World, and Death by Sin, and so Death pass'd upon all Men, in whom all have sinned.* *Ans.* The Greek words $\epsilon\phi' \omega$, ought not to be render'd *in whom*, as relating to the one Man, for by this means the Sense would be very harsh; but (as it is in our *English* Version) *for that* or *because* all have sinned. And in this sense the words $\epsilon\phi' \omega$ are often taken in Scripture, as *2 Cor. 5. 4. Phil. 3. 12.* That which makes this Text the more obscure, is, that in it is a Proposition without a Reddition: And hence some have supply'd the Sense by opposing Christ to Adam, and the Faithful born again of Christ, and by him made Partakers of eternal Life, to those who being born of A-

¹ Ezek. 18. 2, 3, &c.² Ver. 20.³ Deut. 24. 16.⁴ Mat. 16. 27. Rom. 2. 6. 2 Cor. 5. 10.

Adam and continuing in Sin, derive Death from *Adam*. But let this be as it will, 'tis plain from this and the following Verses to the end of the Chapter, that *Adam* is here consider'd as the Type of *Christ*; and those who liv'd from *Adam* down to *Moses*, as Types of the Faithful in *Jesus Christ*. Now the Meaning of the Similitude is this; That as those who liv'd from *Adam* to *Moses*, being Sinners indeed, but not against that express Law enacted by the Denunciation of Death, are dead; not so much upon the account of their own Sins, as for the Transgression of *Adam*, who was punish'd with Death, and so Death pass'd upon all: So they likewise who believe in *Jesus Christ*, and obey the Commands of God, shall be justify'd, tho not so perfectly as *Jesus Christ* was; not indeed without any respect had to their Obedience, but not so much upon that account, as because they are spiritually born again of *Jesus Christ*; for the sake of whose perfect Obedience God is pleas'd graciously to accept of and reward their imperfect but sincere Obedience.

To this it may again be objected, "That if *iq* & *Other Ob-*
 " must be render'd *for that*, or *because*, it follows that *jections an-*
 " all who die have sinned: But Infants die, therefore *swer'd.*
 " they have sinned; not in their own Persons, for that *Obj. 1.*
 " is impossible, therefore they sinned in *Adam*." Answ.
 We deny the Consequence of this Argument; it is only to be concluded of adult Persons who are capable of Sin, that none dies but what is a Sinner. As for Infants, they have nothing to do in the Case before us; for the Apostle shews how they who liv'd from *Adam* to *Moses*, are to be accounted as Types of the Faithful. Therefore as the Faithful, tho justify'd properly for the sake of *Christ*, who was perfectly Righteous, are yet not justify'd without their own Faith and Obedience, tho much inferiour to the Righteousness of *Christ*: So likewise 'tis necessary that they who are oppos'd as the Antitype to them should be consider'd as Sinners; that is, stain'd and polluted with their own Sins, tho not in so high a degree as *Adam* was, which cannot be said of such Children who have not as yet committed any actual Sin.

Again, it may be objected, that *Rom. 5. 14.* it is said, *Obj. 2.*
 " That Death reign'd even over them who had not sin-
 " ned

“ ned after the Similitude of *Adam's Transgression* ; i.e. “ who had not sin'd personally, as *Adam* did, but originally.” *Answ.* The Dissimilitude of their Sin, who liv'd from *Adam* to *Moses*, does not consist in this, that *Adam* sin'd personally, but they not : For there is no Sin but what is personal ; and if their Sin be said to be that very Transgression which they committed in *Adam*, how can it be call'd a Sin not after the Similitude of *Adam's Transgression* ? But herein lies the difference, that they had not sin'd against the express Law of God, enacted under the penalty of Death, as *Adam* had : They had indeed sin'd against the Law of Nature, and against some special Admonitions given them by God ; but still those Sins could not be compar'd with that of *Adam*, who transgress'd, the express Command of God. Hence it is that the Apostle limits it within the time between *Adam* and the Law, wherein Men liv'd without any external Law prescrib'd them by God ; but *Sin is not imputed when there is no Law*, *V. 13.* But the Sinners under the Law, and now under the Gospel, have sin'd after the Similitude of *Adam's Transgression*.

Obj. 3. It is farther urg'd, “ That *V. 19.* of the same Chapter, 'tis said, *By one Man's Disobedience, many were made Sinners.*” *Answ.* To be made a Sinner, in the *Hebrew* Idiom, signifies to be treated as a Sinner. The Apostle's Meaning therefore is, that God, upon the account of *Adam's* first Transgression, had treated his Posterity down to *Moses* as Sinners, but not as Transgressors of that express Law which was enacted under the penalty of Death ; that is, they had all been subject to Death, the Punishment inflicted on *Adam's* Transgression.

Obj. 4. Again it may be objected, “ That it is unjust to punish a Man, who is not a Sinner : But Infants not only die, but are likewise subject to various Calamities of this Life, to Diseases and Pains, with the like. “ Unless therefore they were Partakers of *Adam's* Sin, “ God acts cruelly and unjustly towards them.” *Answ.* Who would think these Men to be in earnest, since they themselves maintain, that God imputes the Sin of our first Parents to Children, and for the sake of that Sin imputed to them, not only subjects them to all the

the Miseries of this Life, but torments them in Hell-fire to all Eternity? But for a full Confutation of this Opinion, we say, that God does not punish the innocent Posterity of *Adam* for his Sin, but subjects them to the Miseries of this Life, and at last to Death, because they are born of sinful *Adam*. Not that he punishes his Sin in their Persons; God forbid: But this is the Result of his Absolute Dominion, whereby he may confer upon every Creature greater or fewer Blessings, or justly visit them with some Evils and Miseries, because they do not exceed the Benefit of Creation, or the Good with which God will recompense this their Patience in the other World.

'Tis likewise objected, "That *Adam* was the Representative of all Mankind, which was then in his Loins; he therefore sinning, all sin'd in him." *Obj. 5.*
Answ. *Adam* cannot be said to be the Representative of Mankind any otherwise, than the Head of any Family may be stil'd the Representative of all those who shall be born of him: As therefore the Sins of any Head of a Family are not imputed to his Posterity, so neither can *Adam's* Sin be imputed to his Posterity.

But here it may again be said, "That God enter'd into Covenant with *Adam* as the Head of all Mankind: As therefore he would have receiv'd the Condition and Promise of Life not only for himself, but likewise for his Posterity had he remain'd innocent; so by his Fall he contracted the Punishment of Death not only to himself, but likewise to all who should issue from his Loins." *Obj. 6.*
Answ. Here are many things rashly assum'd for certain, which are uncertain, nay apparently false. For (1.) that God made such a Covenant with *Adam*, wherein he stood as the Representative of his Posterity, so that whatsoever he might do should be imputed likewise to them, is no where said in Scripture, nor does Reason allow us to believe any such thing: Because then it would follow that *Adam's* Righteousness, if he had remain'd innocent, would likewise have been imputed to all his Posterity; from whence this Absurdity flows, That then *Adam* must have begotten Children quite different from himself, i. e. such as could not sin. For if he had begotten them like himself, it would have been possible for them to have

fallen into Sin: But if this had happen'd, then they would have been at one and the same time Righteous by the Imputation of their Father's Righteousness, and unrighteous by their own Transgression; and so both guilty of Life and Death at the same time, which is absurd. (2.) Mankind was likewise in the Loins of *Adam* when he repented and obtain'd pardon of God: If then God in giving the Law had made a Covenant in *Adam* with all his Posterity, why were not they as well as he receiv'd into favour? What reason is there, that the giving the Law should be universal, but the Pardon of Sin should be particular? (3.) No Man can by any Action represent the Person of another, unless empower'd by him so to do: For in this case only whatsoever Offence the one commits, may be imputed to the other: But *Adam* was not empower'd with any such Authority by his Posterity.

b). 7.

Lastly they urge, "That we sinned in *Adam* before we had a Being, just as *Levi* paid Tithes in *Abraham* before he was born, *Heb. 7. 9.*" *Answ.* (1.) The Apostle himself says that this is a figurative sort of Expression, *ὡς ἔπος εἰπέναι*, as I may so say. (2.) The case is not the same with paying of Tithes, and Sin: A Son or Grandson may, in a figurative way of speaking, be said to pay Tithes in his Father or Grandfather, because the Tenth of their Estate does in a manner depart from him, which was to descend to him by right of Inheritance. But Sin, as 'tis a voluntary and personal Action, does not reach any farther than the Person who commits it.

S E C T. IV.

Of Original Corruption.

Having in the last Section overthrown the Notion of the Imputation of *Adam's* Sin, we shall in this take into examination what is said concerning Original Corruption. And here we freely own that Men are now born less pure than *Adam* was created, and with some kind of propensity to Sin. But this Inclination is not Sin properly so call'd, or the Habit of Sin transmitted to them

What sort
of Corruption
is in
Men.

them by *Adam*; but only a natural Inclination of attaining that which is grateful to the Flesh; which is properly owing to the Constitution of Body, which we derive from our next immediate Parents. For according to the Difference of Constitutions, the Mind of Man is variously carry'd out to divers Objects, so that what is grateful to one, is unpleasant to another. But whereas things pleasing to our Flesh are commonly opposite to the Divine Will, because God in denying them would try the Readiness of our Obedience, hence this Inclination to these Objects becomes an Inclination to Sin. But besides this, Men of themselves are depriv'd of the power of exercising a Religion that is sufficient for Salvation: Because 'tis owing purely to the Grace of God that the Sinner is pardon'd, or has the means of attaining Salvation reveal'd to him.

After all, there are some Seeds of Religion remaining in them, which they may excite, so as to worship God according to the Abilities granted them: Whether those Seeds be a certain innate Idea of a Deity, and the common Notions of Probity; or that reasoning Faculty born with us, by the assistance of which we come to a clear knowledge of the Existence of God from the Contemplation of the Works of Nature, and look upon those common Notions as the Rule of living well: So that they are guilty of a heinous Crime, who neglect the exciting of them. Some See of Religion in Men.

But the great Question is, whether there be not besides in Man a certain original Corruption, or Habit of Sin transmitted from *Adam* to all his Posterity, which is truly and properly Sin, by which the Understanding, Will, and all the Affections are so deprav'd, that they are only inclin'd to Evil; nay that all Men by nature are prone to hate God and their Neighbour. This is generally held by the *Contra-Remonstrants*; and they carry the point so high, that some of them, particularly *Spinæus* *, and *Hildersham* †, say that we have all by nature This Corruption not Sin properly call'd.

* Lib. 7. de Tranquillitate Animi. † Psal. 51. Lect. 60. where he has these words: Adamus sibi ac Posteris suis accepit imaginem Satanæ, in eamque mutatus est. Hincque factum quod omnes Naturâ (horribile quidem auditu, sed tamen ve-

u'd by ture the Image of the Devil. But such a Corruption
ral Ar- is neither reconcilable with Scripture, nor with right
ments. Reason, as we shall evince by the following Arguments.

1. 1. First, the Scripture tells us, that there is no Corruption in Children, which is truly and properly Sin: They are therein said to have *no Knowledg between Good and Evil* ¹, not to be able to *discern between their Right Hand and their Left* ²; and before they are born, *not to have done any Good or Evil* ³. Nay it ascribes to them such an Innocence, Freedom from Evil, and other Qualifications, as are not only recommended to adult Persons, but also requir'd by our Lord as necessary Conditions for their entring into the Kingdom of Heaven ⁴.

3. 2. Secondly, 'tis absurd to maintain that God has punish'd Men with such a Corruption, which is truly and properly speaking a Sin, and from whence all actual Transgressions do necessarily proceed; and at last punishes Men for that Corruption with Hell-Torments. For this is not only to make God the Author of Sin, but also by this his Punishment to give him a fresh occasion of punishing.

3. 3. Thirdly, it cannot be conceiv'd how this Sin could be propagated. For it is not inherent in the Soul, which, according to the Opinion of those Doctors, was immediately created by God; and therefore if it were polluted with Sin, that Sin would have God for its Author. Nor could it be inherent in the Body before the Soul was infus'd into it; because the Body of it self is a lifeless Lump incapable of sinning. Nor lastly can it proceed from the Union of the Soul with the Body, because neither of them being polluted before the Union of them, which is only a Mode, can-

rum est) quàm maxime Diabolo similes simus. Consideremus ergo Naturam nostram illiusque Corruptionem in Proprietatibus Operibusque ipsius, & clarè patebit, nullam Creaturam in universa Terra existere Naturæ adeo venenatæ, quàm unumquemque nostrum.

¹ Deut. 1. 39. ² Jon. 4. 11. ³ Rom. 9. 11. ⁴ Matt. 18. 3, 4, & 19. 14.

not infect them. Diseases, Constitutions, and an Inclination to some particular Vice may be propagated from Father to Son; but this Inclination, as we said before, is of it self no Sin, 'tis only the Source and Fountain-head of Sins if the Man gives way to it.

Fourthly, no Sin that is involuntary deserves Punishment; because nothing ought to be more voluntary, than that which renders a Man liable to Punishment, even to the everlasting Punishment of Hell-fire: But original Corruption is involuntary, therefore, &c. Arg. 4.

To this Argument many things are objected, but such as are very frivolous, and deserve not a particular Answer; we shall therefore rather proceed to consider the principal Reasons commonly assign'd for the maintaining of the Notion of original Corruption.

In the first place they urge *Rom. 5. 12. By one Man Sin enter'd into the World.* Now, say they, this was not actual, but original Sin, i. e. habitual Sin, which is propagated to *Adam's* Posterity. *Ans.* The Apostle in that place means nothing else but the actual and personal Sin of *Adam*; for none else enter'd into the World by the first Man, by which Death also was introduc'd. But Death did not enter into the World by original Sin, but by *Adam's* first Transgression. The plain meaning therefore of the Text is this, that Sin had its first Rise from *Adam*, who also died for it; and therefore all those who imitated *Adam* in his Transgression, have been subjected to the same Death. Rom. 5. explain

The second place they cite, is *Gen. 6. 5.* where, when God was about to bring upon the wicked World the universal Flood, 'tis said, that *the Wickedness of Man was great in the Earth, and every Imagination of the Thoughts of his Heart was only evil continually.* *Ans.* (1.) This place does not treat of Sin as common to all Men, since *Noah* is an Exception to it, who is said to be a just and perfect Man. (2.) This Wickedness is call'd *the Imagination of the Heart*, which denotes voluntary Wickedness, and therefore cannot be attributed to original Corruption, with which we are born. (3.) Here is describ'd that Wickedness which Gen. 6. explain

was the impulsive Cause why God would destroy the World by the Flood ; but this was not Original Sin, since that being always the same, why did it not provoke God to anger before ?

14. 4. Another place alledg'd by the Men of that way, is
ain'd. Job 14. 4. *Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean ? not one.* *Ans.* By the whole Context it appears that Job does not here speak of a moral, but of a physical and natural Uncleaness, which is the cause of all the Infirmities and Diseases to which a Man that is born of a Woman is subject. Job therefore acknowledges that he was liable as well as all other Men to the common Calamities of this Life, and had no reason to expect an Exemption from them.

1. 51. 5. The fourth Text urg'd by them, is *Psal. 51. 5. Behold*
ain'd. *I was shapen in Iniquity, and in Sin did my Mother conceive me.* *Ans.* Altho the very literal Sense of these words should be allow'd of, yet this would make nothing for Original Sin. For, (1.) David does not say that he sin'd in his Mother ; but only makes mention of her Sin. (2.) Nor does he so much as mention Adam, for he goes no farther back than his Mother. (3.) Nor lastly does he say that all Men were born in Iniquity, but confines the Expression only to himself. What therefore David here says of himself, must be look'd upon as an Hyperbole, whereby he would denote that he was a very grievous Sinner : And this Explication is very agreeable to the Condition David was then in, and to the Scope of the whole Psalm, wherein that Royal Penitent laments and bewails his Sins of Adultery and Murder in the most pathetical and aggravating Expressions, that a Soul truly touch'd with Remorse could possibly invent.

h. 2. 3. The last place they produce, is *Eph. 2. 3. We were by Nature Children of Wrath.* *Ans.* We have already (*B. 2. Chap. 4. Sect. 4.*) explain'd this Text, which may serve as a Reply to what they would conclude from it ; and therefore we shall add nothing farther to it, but refer the Reader to what was there offer'd in the Explication thereof.

Argu-
nts for
ginal
ruption
ited. To these places of Scripture they add some Arguments to prove this Original Corruption : As first,
“ Adam by Generation could transmit nothing to his
“ Posterity,

“ Posterity, but what he had himself: Since there- Arg. 1.
 “ fore he was polluted with Sin, he must necessarily
 “ have begotten Sinners, because as the Root is, such
 “ are the Branches, *Rom. 11. 16.*” To this we answer,
 (1.) ’Tis true, that *Adam* could not by Generation
 transmit what himself was depriv’d of; but it does not
 from thence follow, that *Adam* transmitted whatsoever
 he had to his Posterity, but only such things as could be
 communicated to them by Generation. ’Tis certain,
 according to the common and most probable Opinion of
 Divines, that *Adam* did not transmit his Soul to Poste-
 rity; the nature of it, as being a Spirit, not admitting
 of such a Propagation. The same we affirm of Sin,
 which being personal, cannot reach any farther than the
 Person who commits it; and ’tis impossible it should be
 transmitted to others by Generation. And then, (2.) as
 to *Rom. 11. 16.* it is not there said in the general, *as is*
the Root, so are the Branches, but *if the Root be holy, so*
are the Branches. Now that this place makes nothing
 for the Proof of Original Corruption, will appear if we
 consider, that by *Holiness* here is not understood the in-
 herent Quality, or Vertue of Holiness; but that exter-
 nal Holiness, or Separation of the *Jews* from the rest
 of Mankind. This God did when he chose their Root,
i. e. their Father *Abraham*, that he might always re-
 serve to himself some of his Branches, or Posterity,
 and deliver them (out of his special Favour to their
 Father *Abraham*) from the common Calamity of the
Gentile World: But so as that tho some of them should
 be cut off for their Unbelief, yet others of the *Gen-*
tiles by Faith in Jesus Christ should be grafted in, and
 reputed as the Children of *Abraham*, as Branches of
 the same Root.

But secondly, they say, “ That Circumcision was Arg. 2.
 “ a Remedy against Original Sin.” *Answ.* This is
 spoke at random, and without any Warrant from
 Scripture. On the contrary, there are many and
 weighty Arguments on the other side, which we shall
 lay down when we come to treat of Circumcision.

Thirdly, they tell us, “ That the Baptism of In- Arg. 3.
 “ fants is the washing away of Sin, which can be no
 “ other than Original Sin, since they have not com-
 “ mitted any actual Transgressions.” *Answ.* Tho we
 should

should grant that Infants were baptiz'd in the Primitive Times, as well as they are at present, being both a lawful, pious and decent Practice; yet it does not from thence follow that their Baptism denotes a washing away of Sins, but only an Obligation to a holy Life.

4. Fourthly, "If Infants are not polluted with Sin, then Christ is not their Saviour." *Answ.* He is their Saviour, not because he cleanses them from Sin, for Infants are incapable thereof; but because he delivers them from Death, which they deriv'd from *Adam* by a natural Generation, and from which they could not be freed but by Jesus Christ. We therefore maintain that Children dying in their Infancy are sav'd, not by their own natural Innocence, but by the Redemption of Jesus Christ.

5. Fifthly, they argue, "That the Tokens of Wickedness are apparent in Children; for they scratch, bite, &c." *Answ.* All these things are only natural Inclinations of attaining what is grateful to the Flesh, and of avoiding what is ungrateful and irksome to it; which before they come to the Use of Reason, cannot be reckon'd a Vice in them.

6. Sixthly, 'tis urg'd, "That Infants die, therefore are they polluted with Sin; because Death is the Consequent, and Wages thereof." *Answ.* The natural Death which we derive from *Adam*, is not properly the Punishment of Sin, but only the Consequence of *Adam's* Transgression: And that Death which is the Wages of Sin, is not a natural, but eternal Death; which cannot affect Children, but only those who have been guilty of a voluntary Transgression of the Commands of God.

7. Lastly, they say, "That original Corruption is an Evil; and that 'tis either an Evil of Guilt, or of Punishment: if the former, then 'tis Sin; if the latter, then 'tis ask'd, of whose Sin 'tis a Punishment? Is it of *Adam's*? Then the Punishment due to the Guilty is inflicted on the Innocent. Or is it the Punishment of our Sin? But then there would be some

Chap. I. Body of Divinity.

“ other Sin in us precedent to what is original.”

Ans. Here is not a regular Distribution of the several Particulars, which this Argument ought to contain; for besides the Evil of Guilt and of Punishment, there is a third sort, *viz.* that which is natural, such as the Miseries and Afflictions of this Life. And to this last kind of Evils ought this Corruption to be refer'd; since with respect to us 'tis neither a Sin, nor a Punishment, but only a natural Evil, which by reason of the Punishment inflicted on *Adam* is deriv'd to us, or rather a Deprivation of some Good, which we should otherwise have enjoy'd.

As to what some have of late advanc'd, that Children are not only born with the Pollutions of Sin about them, but even whilst they are in the Womb are guilty of actual Sins, and have as soon as the Soul is united to the Body, an actual Aversion to God and Goodness; this we look upon to be absurd, as being contrary to Reason, as well as Scripture, which tells us that Children before they are born *do neither Good nor Evil*, Rom. 9. 11.

S E C T. V.

Of the Punishment of Original Sin.

It now remains that we should inquire what is the Punishment of Original Sin. The Schoolmen commonly maintain that Original Sin deserves the Punishment of Loss, *i. e.* to be excluded for ever from the Kingdom of God, without any sense of Pain; but that Infants are deliver'd from it by Baptism, which takes away the Guilt of Original Sin: And therefore they have invented a Purgatory of Infants who die unbaptiz'd, wherein they are detain'd as Captives, without any sense of Pain. This Opinion, if taken in a right sense, ought not to be rejected. For as Original Sin (as they term it) is not truly and properly speaking Sin; so likewise it does not properly deserve Punishment. But whereas Death deriv'd from *Adam* to all Men has some Analogy with Punishment, we do not dispute that Name, provided it be only call'd so by way of Analogy.

The Schoolmen maintain of Punishment of original Sin

As

As to what they add of the Purgatory of Infants dying without Baptism, 'tis a mere Fiction. Besides, neither Baptism nor Circumcision are any where call'd the Remedy against Original Sin. Nay, all Children, as by *Adam* they are subjected to a Necessity of dying; so, in our opinion, they are freed from Death by Christ, whether they be baptiz'd or not. For the Promise of the Woman's Seed bruising the Serpent's Head belongs to all Mankind: And 'tis acknowledg'd by all, that the Children are Partakers of the Privileges granted to their Parents, unless by a new Act of Disobedience they render themselves unworthy of them. But Children dying in their Infancy have not contracted the Guilt of a new Disobedience, whether they be baptiz'd or not; therefore they are all comprehended within that general Promise.

The Opinion of the *Calvinists* is, that Original Sin deserves the Punishment of Sense, or the eternal Torments of Hell-fire; so that many Children dying in their Infancy are condemn'd thereto. This is the common Opinion of those Doctors with respect to the Children of Infidels dying in their Infancy; but as to the Children born of believing Parents, they do not openly avow so much. Some * in express Terms teach us, that the Difference of Election and Reprobation takes place even with respect to the Children of the Faithful, so that some of these dying in their Infancy are cast into Hell. Others are not so bare-fac'd in their Assertions, but disguise their true Sentiments by ambiguous Expressions; tho when the Mask is taken off, 'tis plain that they mean the same thing with the former. But however this be, whether this Punishment be apply'd only to the Children of Infidels, or be likewise extended to some of the Faithfuls Children, the Opinion is absurd and repugnant to Scripture and Right Reason, as I shall evince by the following Arguments. As,

First, *Adam* himself, who truly and properly committed the Sin, was not subject to the Punishment of Hell-torments; for God, as was shew'd before, did

* Paræus, Zanchius, Perkins, Donteklok, & Hildersham.
not

not threaten him therewith: And according to the general Opinion of Divines he was pardon'd, and had the Punishment which he incur'd by his Sin remitted to him: Therefore 'tis not at all likely, that God should punish his Posterity with Hell-torments for that Sin which they never consented to, and were not conscious of, being committed several Ages before they were born.

Secondly, *Adam's* Transgression would have a greater efficacy for the destroying and condemning, than *Christ's* Obedience has for the Salvation of Men. For *Adam's* Sin (according to them) has laid all Men under the Guilt of Hell-fire: Whereas the Obedience of *Christ* has redeem'd only a few (with respect to the rest) viz. such only as are absolutely elected to Salvation. And this against the express words of the Apostle, who says, *But not as the Offence, so also is the Free-gift: For if through the Offence of one many be dead, much more the Grace of God, and the Gift by Grace, which is by one Man, Jesus Christ, hath abounded unto many.* Arg.

Thirdly, 'Tis repugnant both to the Justice and Mercy of God, to torment Infants with the eternal Pains of Hell-fire only for Original Sin. 'Tis repugnant to his Justice, (1.) Because that does not allow, that the Innocent, who have no knowledge of Good or Evil, should suffer the Punishment contracted by the Guilty. (2.) Because Creation would be so far from being a Blessing to such Children, that it would be the greatest Curse. Such an Opinion is likewise repugnant to the Mercy of God; (1.) Because the *Philanthropy* of God is commended to us, in that he had compassion on sinful Men, and not on the Angels who had *finned*: But according to these Men, God would act more severely towards Men, than towards the Devils; since he rejected the Devils who were guilty by their own actual Fault, whilst he would consign over to Hell-fire innocent Men, and young Children, who could not be guilty by their own Act and Deed. (2.) God swears by himself, *that he wills not the Death of a Sinner, but ra-* Arg.

ther that he should turn from his Wickedness and live¹; much less does he will the everlasting Punishment of young Children. (3.) The Love of God towards Men exceeds the Love of a Mother towards the Child of her Womb²: But what Mother could endure to behold her young Infant tormented in a lingring Flame? How could she hear his miserable Cries without relenting? And shall God, the most tender Lover of Mankind, torment them, tho innocent, with eternal Fire? (4.) God is represented in Scripture as sparing the Guilty for the sake of the Innocence of the Children³; and shall we suppose that he would torment them without intermission with the most intense Torments of everlasting Misery? That be far from us.

Nay, tho we should grant, what ought not to be granted, that Original Sin does deserve the eternal Torments of Hell-fire; yet it cannot from thence be infer'd, that God does cast any Children dying in their Infancy into Hell, since he has in Christ provided an universal Remedy for all Men; which the Apostle not only proves by a long Comparison made between Christ and Adam⁴, but likewise in exprefs words says; *That as in Adam all die, so in Christ shall all be made alive.*

bapti- From hence appears the Fallity of their Opinion, who condemn to Hell-fire not only the Children of Infidels, but even those of believing Parents, who are baptiz'd and admitted into Covenant with God, if they die in their Infancy. For besides that this Opinion is contradictory to that universal Covenant of God, whereby thro Christ he has deliver'd all Men from the Death which they derive from Adam; it is a manifest Reproach cast upon Baptism, and consequently upon God himself, who instituted that Divine and Federal Rite. For Baptism is the outward Seal annex'd to the Divine Covenant, by which God declares himself ready to receive into Covenant all who are duly baptiz'd. If therefore some baptiz'd Infants are predestinated to eternal Fire for the sake of Original Sin, it follows

¹ Ezek. 33. 11. ² Is. 49. 15. ³ Jon. 4. 10, 11. ⁴ Rom. 5. 12, &c. ⁵ 1 Cor. 15. 22.

that some by this solemn Rite are admitted into Covenant with God, to whom he never design'd such a Favour, and whom from all Eternity he intended to exclude from that Covenant: And consequently the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, in whose Name Baptism is administer'd, are call'd upon to be Witnesses to an uncertain, doubtful, fallacious, and with respect to many, a false thing; which is downright Blasphemy. Hence it is, that *Zanchius*, to avoid this Absurdity, would have all Infants baptiz'd under this Restriction, either express'd or understood, *I, O God, baptize this Infant according to the Election and Purpose of thy Divine Will*. But by this means the whole Administration of Baptism is converted into a doubtful and uncertain Sign, and the believing Parents in procuring their Children to be baptiz'd are left at an uncertainty, whether God would have them admitted into Covenant or not. And how pernicious and destructive of true Religion such an Opinion is, we leave the World to judg.

S E C T. VI.

Of the Propagation of Sin by Adam's Posterity, and the Power of the Law of Nature for restraining it.

After our first Parent had brought Sin into the *The Pro-* World, and thereby included all his Posterity under *gress of Sin* a necessity of dying, in process of Time the Power of Sin grew to a great head under his Posterity, so that they polluted themselves with various Transgressions, and by this means *came short of the Glory of God*¹. It was not long after the Creation, that *Cain* mov'd with Envy slew his Brother *Abel*; and in his Family Wickedness soon rose to a great height, as may be seen in *Lamech* and others. The Family of *Seth*, tho' for some time it retain'd its Integrity, and had the true Worshippers of God confin'd to it, yet by degrees it wholly degenerated, and were all of them, except *Noah* and

¹ Rom. 3. 23.

his Family cut off by the Universal Deluge. Nor was there any Remedy provided strong and efficacious enough to restrain the exorbitant Power of Sin; because Men were destitute of that clear Promise and Application of the Divine Grace which is now brought to light thro the Gospel of our Redeemer Jesus Christ.

The Law of Nature uncapable of suppressing

True it is, God still left them the Law of Nature, or the Light of Right Reason, whereby to discern betwixt Good and Evil, and to be the Rule of their Actions. But tho this was sufficient in it self to direct Men, yet it was altogether uncapable of suppressing and restraining the Power and Dominion of Sin, the Yoke of which is not shaken off without the greatest Strugglings and Violence offer'd to the Soul.

Various Signs of God's Grace and Justice.

God therefore did from the very Beginning shew some Signs of his Grace to Men, thereby to induce them to the Love of what was Just and Righteous, and to the Hatred of Sin: And demonstrated himself to be the Punisher of Sinners, and the Rewarder of those who seek him. This he did, (1.) by some general Admonitions and Precepts, of which nature are the two Precepts given to *Noah* after the Flood, of not eating Flesh with the Blood, and of not shedding Man's Blood. (2.) By Promises and Threatnings: Such was that general Promise of the Woman's Seed breaking the Serpent's Head, and the Threatning against *Cain* for the Murder of his Brother. (3.) By famous Instances of God rewarding the Good, as *Abel*, and *Enoch*; and of his punishing the Wicked, as *Cain*, and the Old World, &c.

The Increase of Sin, and Rise of Idolatry.

However none of those Methods, no not the Severity of God's Judgments, were able to restrain the Wickedness of Men, which spread more than ever after the Flood. For then we read of *Ham*, who derided his Father's Nakedness; and to all the other Sins Idolatry was added, which we never read of before the Flood, nor is it likely that then there was any such thing. For the Creation of the World by God was still fresh in their Memories, the Divine *Schechinah* or Glory often appear'd to them, and the Purity of Religion was preserv'd by those who were call'd the Sons of God. But after the Flood a twofold Idolatry was introduc'd; the first was that whereby Men worship'd God under

der the Representation of some Image; and the other was that whereby they paid adoration to inanimate Beings, such as the Sun, Moon, and Stars, instead of God. By this means the whole World was given up to Idolatry, and worship'd either the Figments of their own Brain, Images of their own Invention; or else *the Creature more than the Creator, who is God blessed for evermore.*

S. E. C. T. VII.

Of the Covenant made between God and Abraham.

Mankind being thus degenerated, it pleas'd God to *The Elec* make choice of a particular Family, to whom he would *tion of* express his special Favour, first, by preserving the Pu- *braham* rity of his Worship in it, and then by sending in the *Family.* Fulness of Time the Redeemer out of it, whom he had before design'd for the World. To this end he kept this Family, and the Nation proceeding from it, distinct from all other People, that they might not be mix'd with them, or follow their Idolatry; and that it might appear that the promis'd Redeemer proceeded from them. Now this Family was that of *Abraham*, with whom God enter'd particularly into Covenant, the Nature of which we shall now explain.

We shall consider two things in this Covenant made *The Nat* between God and *Abraham*, viz. First the Conditions *of the Cov* of it prescrib'd by God to *Abraham*; Secondly, *Abra-* *nant ma* *ham's* ready Obedience in performing those Conditions. *with A* *braham* The Conditions of the Covenant are two; the first are certain Duties to be perform'd by *Abraham*, compriz'd in several Precepts given to him; the other contains several Divine Promises, upon *Abraham's* Performance of the Conditions of the Covenant.

The Precepts given to *Abraham* are chiefly these *Precept* three: (1.) That he should depart from his own Land given by *and Kindred*, and from his Father's House, and go into *God to* a Land which God would shew him. By this God in- *brahan* tended to take away from *Abraham* all Occasion of falling into Idolatry, as also to try his Obedience; with which Precept he very readily comply'd. (2.) That

he should *walk before God and be perfect*¹: Now by walking before God is meant, either the ordering his Life according to the Rule prescrib'd him by God, which is elsewhere in Scripture stil'd the walking in the Commandments and Ways of the Lord²: Or else the walking so circumspectly, as if always in the presence of God, who beheld all his Actions. 'Tis added, *and be thou perfect*; the meaning of which is not that there should not be any the least Defect in him, but that he should addict himself with all Sincerity to the Observation of the whole Law of God, and never wilfully and knowingly transgress any Precept, nor neglect the growing still better. (3.) The last Precept given to *Abraham*, was that he should be circumcis'd with all his House; which was a hard Commandment, whether we consider the Painfulness or the Shamefulness of performing it: However this Father of the Faithful readily comply'd with this Precept also.

Several
Particu-
lars as to
Circumci-
sion consi-
der'd.

But that we may more distinctly and fully treat of Circumcision, we shall enquire into its Institution, and the various Circumstances of it.

In the first place 'tis to be observ'd, that Circumcision was prescrib'd to *Abraham*, when God made him a Promise of the Seed which should spring from his Loins, in whom all the Nations of the Earth should be blessed. By *Seed* in the literal Sense is meant that numerous Posterity, which proceeding from him should be as the Stars of Heaven, and the Sand on the Sea-shore innumerable: But according to the mystical Sense it denoted our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, who by way of eminence is stil'd *the Seed*³, nay *the promis'd Seed*.

Secondly we are to observe, That 'tis call'd by God *a Covenant*, and *the Sign of a Covenant*. Hence it appears that Circumcision was appointed by God as the closest Band of the Covenant; and because it was the only Ceremony prescrib'd to *Abraham*, and annex'd to the Covenant made with him, it was as strictly to be observ'd as the Covenant it self, and serv'd as a visible Sign to seal the Covenant both on God's and on *Abraham's* part. However, tho Circumcision be stil'd *an E-*

¹ Gen. 17. 1. ² Deut. 28. 9. Ps. 119. 1. ³ Gal. 3. 16.

verlasting Covenant, yet God never intended that it should last always, but only till the promis'd Seed should come: From whence we conclude that they are in the wrong who would have Christians, that own Christ for the *Messiah* and the promis'd Seed, to be circumcis'd: Of which number were the Zealots for the Law, who turn'd from Judaism to Christianity, and whom St. *Paul* vigorously oppos'd. Nor was Circumcision (as some pretend) appointed for a Remedy against Original Sin: For (1.) it was only enjoin'd to the Males; what Remedy then would the Females have had? (2.) If it had been so, why was it put off to the eighth Day, since the Child might die before, and so lose that Privilege? (3.) Every Male among the *Jews* was circumcis'd, therefore every Male was freed from the Guilt of Original Sin, and endu'd with Grace; which we believe our Adversaries will hardly assent to.

In the third Place 'tis to be observ'd, That the Child was to be circumcis'd on the eighth Day. Now what was the reason of this Injunction, cannot be determin'd; 'tis enough that God commanded it should be so. Men at best can only give uncertain guesses why it was so; and since the Scripture is silent as to this matter, we chuse rather to own our Ignorance, and that we can assign no reason for this Injunction.

Lastly, This Precept is enacted upon a severe Threatning, *that whosoever was not circumcis'd, his Soul should be cut off from his People*. By this some understand an untimely, violent and ignominious Death, which God would either himself, or by the Hand of the Magistrate, inflict upon the uncircumcis'd Person. But others (with whose Opinion we rather side) suppose that this Phrase denotes only a Civil Death, which consisted in their not enjoying the same Privileges with the rest of the *Jews*, but being excluded from them as if they were really dead.

But here it may be ask'd, Why would God cut off *A Query*
the Soul of the uncircumcis'd from his People? For it *answer'd*
was not the Child's but the Parent's Fault that he was not circumcis'd, therefore the Parents ought rather to be punish'd. *Ans.* (1.) This cutting off the Children was really a Punishment of the Parents: For

since all Parents are by Nature inclin'd to love their Children, it must needs have been a grievous Punishment to them to see their Children depriv'd by their neglect of those Privileges, which they would otherwise have enjoy'd. (2.) Tho no Threatning were denounc'd against the Parents, yet from the Story of *Moses* it appears that they were more guilty of Punishment in the sight of God for this Omission than the Children were, since God sought to slay *Moses* for not circumcising his Son.

promise to
Abraham
God's en-
ing into
Covenant
with him.

Having thus consider'd the Divine Precepts, an Obedience to which was requir'd from *Abraham*, we shall now proceed to the other part of the Covenant, viz. the Promises, which are these four. (1.) That God would give the Land of Canaan to *Abraham's Seed* for a Possession¹. (2.) That God would multiply his Seed as the Stars of Heaven, and the Sand on the Sea-shore for Multitude². (3.) That in his Seed all the Nations of the Earth should be blessed³, and that he would be their God⁴. To which is added, (4.) *I am thy Shield, and thy exceeding great Reward*⁵. This last Promise differs from the former in this, that the other three are special, and point out the particular Good promis'd, whereas this is in general Terms, and may be extended to all the Favours and Benefits which God would bestow upon him and his Posterity: Either *Temporal*, by defending him as with a Shield from all the Calamities of this Life, and by being his Reward in showering upon him all manner of Blessings to render his Life the more comfortable: Or else *Spiritual and Eternal*, in delivering him from Eternal Death, pardoning his Sins, and bestowing upon him Everlasting Life. There is nothing to hinder the joining of both those Senses together, since the Words are general, and contain in them no Limitation or Restriction.

Abraham
and the
promise of
justifica-
tion and E-
ternal Life.

From what has been said on this Argument 'tis plain, that according to the Mystical and Sublime Sense *Abraham* had promis'd to him a plenary Justification and

¹ Gen. 12. 7. & 13. 15. & 15. 18. ² Gen. 13. 16. & 15. 5. & 22. 17. ³ Gen. 12. 3. & 18. 18. & 22. 18.

⁴ Gen. 17. 7, 8. ⁵ Gen. 15. 1.

Eternal Life: Nor can we Christians make any question of it, if we believe what our Saviour says¹, who from the Words of God (*I am the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob*) utter'd long after their Deaths, infers by a natural Consequence, that they should be rais'd from Death to Life Eternal: Which he would not have infer'd, had not this been the Intention of God to signify as much by that Expression. Hence 'tis likewise said, that *God is not ashamed to be call'd their God, because he hath prepar'd for them a City*². And who can question but that this Blessing fell to *Abraham's* share, since the Scripture tells us, That *Abraham believ'd God, and it was imputed to him for Righteousness*³; That *he was the Friend of God*⁴? And we likewise find that *Abraham*, as the Father of the Faithful, has the chief Place in the Kingdom of Heaven; and those who are admitted into that Kingdom, are said to sit down with *Abraham*, and *Isaac*, and *Jacob*⁵: and *Lazarus* after his Death is said to have been carry'd by the Angels into *Abraham's Bosom*, as into the most honourable Place of the Happiness of Heaven⁶.

Hitherto we have treated of the Conditions of the Covenant made with *Abraham*; it remains that we should consider the Readiness of his Obedience in performing them. Now the Sacred History informs us fully of his Compliance with all the Divine Commands: That he departed from his own Country, and his Father's House, without any Reluctance; That he walk'd before God in performing Acts of Piety towards Him, and Acts of Justice, Mercy, and Hospitality towards his Neighbour; And lastly, that in his old Age he submitted himself and all his Family to be circumcis'd.

This Obedience of *Abraham* had Faith for its Foundation, whereby he stedfastly believ'd the Divine Promises, being fully persuaded that what God had promised, he was able also to perform. Now *Abraham's* Faith was the more illustrious upon the following accounts: (1.) Because his Faith was without any pre-

The Obedience of Abraham

Faith Found of it, several accounts

¹ Mat. 22. 32. ² Heb. 11. 16. ³ Gen. 15. 6. Rom. 4. 3. Gal. 3. 6. ⁴ Jam. 2. 13. ⁵ Mat. 8. 11. ⁶ Luke 16. 22.

cedent, he had no Instance before him to excite him to such a Belief in God; and therefore is he stil'd *the Father of the Faithful*. (2.) Because the things that were the Object of his Faith, were altogether above the reach of human Reason to comprehend, and next to impossible, without a firm Persuasion of the Divine Power and Veracity to be believ'd; being such as had no natural Causes to produce them, but seem'd contradictory to the Ordinary Course of Nature: Of this kind was the Promise made of giving to his Posterity the Land of *Canaan* for an Inheritance, tho then possess'd by Kings and States much more powerful than himself; as also the Promise of Seed made to one that was old and hitherto barren. (3.) Add to this the Constancy of his Faith, in believing the Promise, which God made him of a Son, tho delay'd for thirteen Years, himself being an hundred, and *Sarah* ninety Years of Age: He still believ'd in God, without regarding the Difficulty of the Promise, and the Impossibility of it according to the ordinary Course of Nature, but relying wholly upon the Power and Veracity of God who promis'd. Hence it is that the Apostle magnifies *Abraham's* Faith in these emphatical Words', *That against Hope he believ'd in Hope; that he consider'd not his own Body now dead, neither yet the Deadness of Sarah's Womb; That he stagger'd not at the Promise thro Unbelief, but was strong in Faith, giving Glory to God; being fully persuaded that what he had promis'd, he was able also to perform.* (4.) But *Abraham's* Faith was most conspicuous in that Trial to which he was put, of offering up his only Son *Isaac*. There were many and great reasons to hinder his performing this Command, but he surmounted all Difficulties, conquer'd his natural Affection to his Son, his only Son *Isaac*, in whom the Promises of God were made to him, and readily comply'd with the Divine Precept; knowing that God, as he was able, so would also raise up his Son from the Dead, from whence also he receiv'd him in a Figure².

But here it may be ask'd, whether *Abraham* believ'd that his Sins should be expiated by Christ? *Ans.*

¹ Rom. 4. 18, 19, 20, 21. ² Heb. 11. 19.

This does not appear from Scripture : However, from what has been already said, it may be infer'd that *Abraham* had some Knowledg of Jesus Christ ; for 'tis not likely that God, intending to comprehend Jesus Christ under the general Promise of the Seed, should keep *Abraham* wholly in ignorance of this his Intention. On the contrary, our Saviour tells us', *That Abraham saw his Day, and was glad.* However it does not from hence follow, tho he had some Knowledg of a Redeemer who was to spring from his Loins, that he had a full insight into the whole Method of Redemption : For since this Expiation by the Death and Blood of Jesus Christ depended on the Divine Good-pleasure, it could not be learn'd by the mere Light of Nature, but the Knowledg of it must proceed only from the Revelation of God.

After all, the Divine Covenant made with this Holy Family was not of sufficient Power fully to restrain Sin. For in *Abraham's* Family we meet with a profane and scoffing *Ismael* : In *Isaac's* we read of *Esau* so addicted to the Pleasures of Sense, that for one Mess of Pottage he sold his Birth-right, and who besides afflicted his Parents by his Marriage with Idolaters, and meditated the Death of his Brother *Jacob*. In the Family of *Jacob*, we meet with *Reuben* the Defiler of his Father's Bed, with *Simeon* and *Levi* Brethren in Iniquity, with *Judah* who committed Whoredom with his Daughter-in-Law *Thamar*, and all the Patriarchs who conspir'd the Death of their Brother *Joseph*, and at last sold him for a Slave. Upon the Increase of that Family, we find that Wickedness increas'd among them ; for they tempted and murmur'd against God in the Wilderness, and committed Idolatry and enormous Crimes both there, and after their Settlement in the promis'd Land. But tho there were Instances of wicked Men in this Family, with whom God was pleas'd to enter into a more especial Covenant ; yet the rest of the World was over-run with gross Impiety. The Cities of *Sodom* and *Gomorrhah*, of *Zeboim* and *Admah*, were overthrown by Fire from Heaven for their shame-

The Covenant made with Abraham not powerful enough to restrain Sin.

1 John 8. 56.

2 Gen. 21. 7.

ful Lusts: The Inhabitants of *Canaan*, when they had fill'd up the Measure of their Iniquity, were rooted out of that Land by God. Nay, the whole Earth lay under such a Power of Idolatry and other Sins, as darken'd the Understandings of Men, extinguish'd by degrees the Light of Nature that was in them, and made them more and more averse to the Worship of the only true God.

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However, 'tis not to be suppos'd, that all who were not comprehended within the Covenant of God made with *Abraham* and his Posterity, were excluded from all means of attaining Salvation; and that God's Favour was so far confin'd to this single Family by virtue of that Covenant, that none else could be Partakers of it. This indeed some do maintain, who tell us that not only all the other Nations, but even *Ismael* and *Esau*, whom God would not look upon as in Covenant with *Abraham*, were absolutely reprobated from Salvation by an antecedent Decree. But from hence it would follow, that as they who are not comprehended within the Covenant are excluded from Salvation, so all who are included in it are absolutely elected to Salvation; both which Positions are apparently false. For on the one hand many of *Jacob's* Posterity were impious, idolatrous, and notorious Offenders, reprov'd as such by the Prophets all along in the Old Testament; and no Man without giving the lye to the Scriptures can say that these were all Partakers of Everlasting Salvation. Nor on the other side can it be said, that all who were not in Covenant with *Abraham* were precluded from all means of attaining Salvation, since we find among them several who were noted for their Piety and Vertue. Thus *Melchisedec*, King of *Salem*, and Priest of the most High God, was in a most eminent manner a Type of our Saviour, so that he is said *to have been made a Priest after his Order*; and 'tis very probable that such a pious King had a great many good Subjects under him. Again, we read of *Job*, whose Piety and Patience is so much recommended to the World; and of *Jethro* the Father-in-Law of *Moses*, who offer'd up a burnt Offering and Sacrifices to the true God.

¹ Gen. 14. 18.

² Exod. 18. 12.

You will ask, Wherein then did the Privilege of *The Priv* those who were in Covenant with *Abraham* consist *lege of* above others? *Answ.* The Good things promis'd by this Covenant, may be taken in a Literal or Mystical *those wh* Sense. According to the Letter, the Possession of the *were in th* Land of *Canaan* was promis'd, which was so peculiar to those who were in Covenant, that they who were not were excluded from it. This is that Election, mention'd *Rom. 9. 11.* whereby God rejected *Esau*, and chose *Jacob*, that he and his Posterity should have the Land of *Canaan* in Possession. According to the Mystical Sense, Eternal Life was comprehended in those External Promises, and was so annex'd to the Covenant, that those who were in it, provided they perform'd the Conditions of it, should by the Grace of God attain this Blessing: But withal, that others should not be so far excluded from Eternal Life, but if they liv'd according to the Law of Nature, and the general Admonitions given them by God, they might likewise obtain it by the Divine Grace, which is communicated to the World by and for the sake of our Lord Jesus Christ. However they who were in Covenant had a great Privilege above other Men, even with respect to Eternal Salvation, and that upon these two accounts: (1.) Because they had a clear and express Rule of living, comprehended in several Precepts given them by God, which the others wanted, being guided only by the Law of Nature. (2.) Because they, by the Divine Promises, could conceive a greater and more certain Hope of Reward, even of Eternal Life, than the others could; who could only infer from the Consideration of the Divine Nature, and the Instances they saw of Vertue rewarded and Vice punish'd, That *God was a Rewarder of those who diligently seek him*¹. After all, it must not be disown'd, that whereas the Blessing of Eternal Life was not express'd in those Promises literally but in a Mystical Sense, the Fathers under this Covenant had only a typical and obscure Hope of Eternal Life; and this Promise was not so efficacious, as if it had been declar'd clearly and in express Words: And

¹ Heb. 11. 6.

consequently this Covenant was not so powerful as to destroy the Dominion of Sin, and bring Men to Eternal Life.

S E C T. VIII.

Of the Law of Moses.

Law in to Abraham's erity. Upon the multiplying of *Abraham's* Family, and the Time approaching wherein God promis'd to introduce them into the Land of *Canaan*, he was pleas'd, by giving a Law as a Fence against all Transgressions, to sanctify this People after a peculiar manner to himself, and to enlarge the Covenant made with *Abraham* by the addition of various Precepts and Promises, that so his Name might be more purely worship'd among this People. But that even this Law could not render Men truly Spiritual, nor bring them to Eternal Life, we will prove in the Sequel.

ethings dera- n it. Whereas this Law (stil'd the *Old Covenant*, in opposition to the New one made by the Mediator Jesus Christ) is very famous, and the People descended from *Abraham, Isaac* and *Jacob*, were subject to it to the coming of the *Messiah*; we will treat more distinctly of it, and shall therein consider, First, the Mediator of this Law or Covenant; Secondly, the Law it self; and Thirdly, its Insufficiency for Justification and purging away of Sins. Of the two former we shall discourse in this, of the last in the next Section.

be Me- or, viz. es. 'Tis more especially to be noted in this Law, that God did not immediately promulge it to the People, but appointed a Mediator, viz. *Moses*, between him and the People, who deliver'd his Commands to them. Now how great a Man *Moses* was, appears clearly from the manner of the Revelation made to him, and the Miracles perform'd by him; both which are certain Testimonies of his being a true Prophet sent forth by God. (1.) As to the Revelation made to him, the Manner of it recorded in Scripture, shews that *Moses* had an extraordinary Familiarity with God; that he consulted with God as a Friend in all dubious Cases, who

who gave him an Answer to what he propos'd; and therein he excel'd all the other Prophets. (2.) As to the Miracles perform'd by *Moses*, whereby God authoriz'd him in his Office, tho they were great and excellent, and above what were perform'd by the other Prophets, yet they fell very short both in Number and Quality of those which were wrought by our Saviour Jesus Christ; as will appear to any that will compare the one with the other.

The Law given to *Moses* was written by the Finger of God on Tables of Stone; which is properly to be understood of the Decalogue, the Summary of the Moral Law. As for the other Precepts which God was pleas'd to add, as explanatory of the Moral Law, or for the External Worship and Government of the *Jews*, *Moses*, by the express Command of God, committed them to Writing in five Books commonly call'd the *Pentateuch*, and which are likewise stil'd the Books of *Moses*. 2. The Law it self contain'd the Pentateuch

The Modern *Jews* maintain, that besides this written Law, there was another given to *Moses* during the forty Days he was on Mount *Sinai*, which is an Explication of the written Law, and necessary for the understanding thereof. This they call the *Oral Law*, because *Moses* did not commit it to Writing, but coming down from the Mount recited it first to his Brother *Aaron*, then to his two Sons *Eliazar* and *Ithamar*, afterwards to the seventy Elders, and at last to all the People. They add farther, that this *Oral Law* was preserv'd among the *Jews* by a continu'd Tradition, till after the Destruction of *Jerusalem* and the Temple; and that upon the Dispersion of the *Jews*, their Rabbies to preserve the Memory thereof collected it into one Volume, which they stil'd *Misnaioth*. Afterwards the Rabbies in *Babylon*, about the fifth Century after Christ, illustrated this Book with some Comments, entitled, *Guemara*. From these two Books arose the *Babylonian Talmud*, wherein (as the *Jews* maintain) is perfectly contain'd whatever is requisite for the Explication of the written Law. But how weak this Pretence of an *Oral Law* is, will appear if we consider, (1.) That there is no mention made of any such Law either in the Scripture, or in the *Jewish* Antiquities, but the People The Opinion of the Modern Jews concerning the Oral Law rectified.
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are every where refer'd to the written Law. (2.) *Moses* would not have ask'd Counsel at the Mouth of the Lord in some doubtful Cases, since the *Oral Law* would have instructed him in all things: But we read that he did consult the Lord sometimes in such Cases, particularly in the Case of the *Israelitish* Woman's Son who blasphem'd¹, of the Man who gather'd Sticks on the Sabbath-Day², of those who during the Passover had defil'd themselves by the dead Body of a Man³, and of the Daughters of *Zelophehad* about the Right of Inheritance⁴. (3.) The Priests did not preserve the Written Law⁵; can any one then believe, that they were such exact Preservers of the Oral Law consisting of so many and various Precepts, and only committed to the Memory of Men? (4.) Lastly, can any one imagine, that God who is Omniscient, and foreknows all future Events, and consequently foresaw the Danger to which the Oral Law would be expos'd by the Dispersion of the *Jews*: Can it, I say, be imagin'd that he would not have provided against the Danger by timely committing it to Writing; but that the Modern Rabbies should be more careful in this respect than God himself? Certainly these Considerations, if duly weigh'd, are enough to shew the Vanity of this Oral Law, and do prove that the Divine Precepts given formerly to *Moses* are not contain'd therein, but only the superstitious Traditions of the *Pharisees*, so often blam'd by our Saviour, and so contrary to true Piety, and such as keep the *Jews* from embracing Christianity.

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Having thus refuted this *Jewish* Fiction of the Oral Law, let us consider the Written Law, wherein two things offer themselves to our Examination; First, the Precepts; Secondly, the Promises and Threatnings.

As to its Precepts, without troubling the Reader with the *Jews* division of them, we shall follow the usual Distribution of the Christian Divines, and consider them under these three Heads, viz. the *Moral*,

¹ Lev. 24. 11, &c.² Numb. 15. 31.³ Chap. 9. 6.⁴ Chap. 27. 1, &c.⁵ As appears from 2 Kings 22. 10.

2 Chron. 34. 14, &c.

Ceremonial, and Political Precepts. Accordingly 'tis said by *Moses* ¹, *These are the Commandments, the Statutes, and the Judgments which the Lord your God commanded to teach you*: Where by Commandments he understands the *Moral Precepts*; by Statutes the *Ceremonies*; and by Judgments the *Political Law* of the *Jews*.

1. The Moral Precepts prescribe our Duty towards God and our Neighbour, as they are contain'd in the two Tables of the Decalogue, or ten Commandments; which tho God wrote himself on two Tables of Stone, yet are such Dictates as natural Reason would give to all Men. These our Saviour has sum'd up in these two Precepts ², *Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy Heart, and with all thy Soul, and with all thy Strength; and thy Neighbour as thy self*: The former of these is contain'd in the first, the latter in the second Table of the Decalogue.

2. The Ceremonial Precepts are those positive Commands that relate to the External Worship of the *Jews*, and which depend on the Good-pleasure of God: Of which there are four sorts. (1.) Such as relate to the Persons dedicated to the Service of God, of whom there were the Priests and *Levites*, and afterwards the *Nazarines*, who devoted themselves by a particular Vow to the Service of God. (2.) Things Sacred, of which number were all the Sacrifices and Oblations, all the First-born both of Men and Beasts, the First-fruits, the Tithes, &c. (3.) The Places dedicated to God's Service, at first the Tabernacle, afterwards the Temple, erected by the Direction, and favour'd with the Blessing of God. (4.) The Times set apart for Divine Worship, of which were their Sabbath, their New-Moons, their three solemn Festivals of the Passover, Pentecost, and Tabernacles; to which are added the Memorial of blowing the Trumpets, and the Feast of Dedication; the Sabbatical or every seventh Year, and the Jubilee or every forty ninth Year.

3. The Political Precepts are such Civil Laws, according to which the *Jewish* Commonwealth was to be administer'd, and were suited to their dwelling in the

¹ Deut. 6. 1. ² Mat. 22. 37, 38, 39.

Land of *Canaan*. And here it was commanded that they should appoint Judges and Magistrates in every Gate, and thro every Tribe, to administer true Judgment to the People. Of these sorts of Tribunals there were three establish'd among the *Israelites*: (1.) A Supreme one, commonly call'd the *Sanhedrim*, consisting of seventy Elders, erected first at *Shiloh*, and then at *Jerusalem*, to whose Determination were committed all the chiefest Matters, such as the Crimes of false Prophecy and Rebellion; the Fault of a whole Tribe, and of the High-Priest: And to this Council all Appeals were made from any inferior Courts. (2.) Another Tribunal was erected at *Jerusalem*, and in all Cities, consisting of twenty three Judges, who pass'd Sentence upon the Fortunes and Lives of Men, except in the four above-mention'd Cases; and Appeals lay from them in all Capital Causes to the *Sanhedrim*. (3.) The last and most inferior Tribunal was that which was erected in the small Towns and Villages, to determine only Civil Rights and Contests between Man and Man. As for the Punishments inflicted on Delinquents, they were either Corporal, such as Whipping, which was not to exceed forty Stripes; or Capital, such as Strangling, Beheading, Burning, and Stoning to Death.

secondly, The Promises annex'd to this Covenant are chiefly of two kinds, either such as relate to some things which contributed to the Happiness of the *Jews*, or to the Person of the *Messiah*, who was to proceed from this People. The Promises of Good things made to them are either Special or General. The former of these contain only such earthly Goods or Blessings as the Observers of the Law should enjoy in the Land of *Canaan*, of which we have a long Catalogue, *Lev. 26.* and *Deut. 28.* The latter are such as were made in general Terms, without the mention of any special Blessing: Such as these, *I will be thy God, I am thy God, I will bless you*, with the like. Now these General Promises may be taken in their Latitude and Extent, so as to comprehend all the Blessings whereby God testifies his Good-will to, and rewards those that serve him; both Spiritual and Eternal, as well as Corporeal and Temporal Blessings. To these General Promises may be refer'd

refer'd those, whereby God promises Life in general to those who keep the Divine Commands: *Ye shall keep* (says he to the *Jews*) *my Statutes and my Judgments, which if a Man do, he shall live in them*¹. True it is, Eternal Life is not expressly mention'd in this Place; however it is not to be doubted but that under this general Term *Life*, that of *Eternal Life* is comprehended. Especially if we consider that the Promise of this Life was as it were the Type and Figure of that which is *Eternal*; just as the Land of *Canaan* and all the Blessings promis'd to the *Jews* typify to us Heaven, and the Spiritual and Celestial Blessings clearly promis'd to us Christians.

From these things laid together we infer, that the Special or Particular Promises of the Law contain'd in them, according to the Letter, nothing but Temporal and Earthly Blessings: But that the General Promises, taken in their Extent, do comprehend under them Heavenly and Eternal Blessings: And the former did (in the Opinion and Expectation of the Wiser among the *Jews*) typify the latter.

To these Promises are oppos'd the Threatnings of the Law, which are likewise General and Particular. The General Threatning was Death, either violent by the Hand of the Magistrate, or miserable and untimely inflicted by God himself. But as we observ'd, that under the General Promise of Life, according to the mystical and utmost Intention of God, *Eternal Life* was comprehended, so also 'tis to be said, that under the General Denunciation of Death, was mystically contain'd Everlasting Death. As to the Particular Threatnings, they only affect this present Life, and either touch the Person, such as various kinds of Diseases, Plagues, &c. or his outward Estate, in depriving him of all the Blessings of this Life, and inflicting upon him the Miseries and Calamities thereof, such as Barrenness, Famine, Captivity, and the like, of which we have a large Catalogue, *Lev. 26. 14, &c. Deut. 28. 15, &c.*

The Promise of the *Messiah* was made likewise under

¹ Lev. 18. 5.

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the Law, as appears not only from what God promis'd *Abraham*¹, *In thy Seed shall all the Nations of the Earth be blessed*, which the Apostle fully informs us refer'd to Christ²; but also by the Promise made to *Moses*, *I will raise them up a Prophet from among their Brethren, like unto thee, and will put my Words in his Mouth*³, &c. which Promise *St. Peter* assures us belong'd to Christ⁴. This Promise was afterwards repeated by the Prophets more fully, pointing out to us the Time and Place of his Birth, his Parentage, and the Office he was to perform here on Earth. But whereas all these things are not clearly express'd, but shadowed out to us by Types and Figures, so perfect a Knowledge of the Office of the *Messiah* could not be had under the Law, as is now manifestly reveal'd to us under the Gospel.

S E C T. IX.

Of the Insufficiency of the Law of Moses for Justification.

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Having in the foregoing Section discours'd of the Law of *Moses*, with respect to its Mediator, and the several Parts thereof, we shall here consider the third thing we propos'd to do, *viz.* to enquire whether the Law could render Men truly Spiritual, and bring them to Everlasting Life, as justified from their Sins? *St. Paul* has fully determin'd this Question when he says, *Gal. 3. 21, 22. If there had been a Law given, which could have given Life, verily Righteousness should have been by the Law: But the Scripture hath concluded all under Sin, that the Promise by Faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe. And again, Heb. 7. 18, 19. There is verily a Disannulling of the Law going before, for the Weakness and Unprofitableness thereof. For the Law made nothing perfect, but the bringing in of a better Hope did, by the which we draw nigh unto God.* However it will be worth our while to de-

¹ Gen. 22. 18. ² Gal. 3. 16. ³ Déut. 18. 18, 19.
⁴ Acts 3. 22.

monstrate this more particularly with respect to the *Mosaical Law*.

Therein we observ'd were three kinds of Precepts, *With respect, 1. To the Political* *the Political Precepts.* viz. the Moral, Ceremonial, and Political. As to the Political Precepts of the Law, 'tis evident that they contributed nothing towards a Spiritual and Eternal Life: for they could lay no restraint upon, nor prescribe Rules to the Mind, that being out of Man's Cognizance; but were a restraint upon the External Actions only, and adapted to the Circumstances of the *Jews*, in order to keep them regular and peaceable in their Lives, and by the Fear of punishments to deter them from transgressing the Divine Commands.

As to the Ceremonial Law, tho many things contain'd therein (such as the High-Priest, the Sacrifices, *2. To the Ceremonial.* the Washings, the Tabernacle, the Feasts, the Paschal Lamb, and Circumcision) were Types and Figures which shadow out to us the Spiritual and Heavenly Blessings of the Gospel-Dispensation; yet neither could they render a Man Spiritual, nor justify him from his Sins. For they were not instituted by God, because they were in their own nature Good, such as had some foundation in the natural Reason with which Men are endu'd; but are only grounded on the Divine Will and Pleasure, whereby God was pleas'd to distinguish the *Jews* from the rest of the World, and to preserve them from falling into Idolatry, and having any Correspondence with the Idolatrous and *Gentile* Nations round about them. At the best, as was said before, these Ceremonial Laws were only the shadow of Good things to come, which could never make the Observers of them perfect, nor purge away Sins. And hence they are call'd by *St. Paul*, not only Elements, but weak and beggarly Elements¹. In the Observance of which there was no internal Efficacy for the promoting of true and solid Vertue and Piety; since a Hypocrite might be a more punctual Observer of them, than the truly Pious, whose Purity of Heart and contrite Spirit are such Sacrifices which God has declar'd he will not despise.

¹ Gal. 4. 9.

The Moral Law could not free Men from the Guilt or Power of Sin.

As to the Moral Law, if we look upon it as Part of the Old Covenant, it cannot free a Man from the Guilt or the Power of Sin. That it cannot free a Man from the Guilt of Sin is evident from hence, that it does not exhibit to us any Promise concerning the true and perfect Remission of Sins; but only appoints an Expiation for such Offences as were committed out of Ignorance or Infirmary, and for carnal Uncleanesses, or outward Pollutions of the Flesh. For the Business of the Law was only to prescribe a Duty to Men, and to threaten the Transgressors of it with Punishment; but to remit the Fault and absolve from Punishment, proceeded not from the Law, but Grace. Nor could the Law free Men from the power of Sin, and render them truly Spiritual; for having not the Promise of Pardon of heinous Sins, it could not absolve them from the Guilt, nor consequently from the Slavery of Sin. Add to this, that the Law was destitute of sufficient Means and Helps for suppressing the Dominion of Sin, and was so far from freeing Men from it, that it rather excited the Concupiscence of Sin: According to that of the Apostle¹, *When we were in the Flesh, the Motions, or Passions, of Sins, which were by the Law, did work in our Members to bring forth Fruit unto Death*: and again², *Sin taking occasion by the Commandment, wrought in me all manner of Concupiscence; for without the Law Sin was dead*. Not that this proceeded from any Fault or Defect in the Law, which was *Holy, Just, and Good*, but from the Depravity of Mens Tempers who were accustomed to do Evil, and who by the Prohibitions of the Law were the more inclin'd to Sin, according to the old Adage, *Nitimur in vetitum, i. e.* What is forbidden we covet most. Besides, the Law having not the Promise of Pardon nor of Eternal Life expressly annex'd to it, could not bring Men to a Spiritual Life, and upon that account was imperfect.

How the Jews were prepar'd to Pious things, whilst the Impious had plenty of all things, had spiritual things.

¹ Rom. 7. 5. ² V. 8.

this Design in it, *viz.* to raise Mens Eyes and Minds from those earthly things, as too vile and unworthy a Reward of their Obedience, and to make them aspire after Spiritual and Heavenly things. Down to the time of the *Babylonish* Captivity, 'tis observable, that the *Jews* were very carnal. Notwithstanding all the Miracles wrought by God upon their Deliverance out of *Egypt*, and afterwards in the Wilderness, they still murmur'd against him. When they were settled in the Land of *Canaan*, tho they received sufficient Testimonies from God, both by Prophecies, Miracles, and Appearances of Angels, yet they often forsook God, and fell into Idolatry. After the Captivity, leaving the first Rudiments of Divine Worship, they seem by their continual Oppressions to have arrived to some degree of Perfection; for God by degrees withdrew his visible Presence from among them, and permitted them to be oppress'd with various Afflictions, that so he might raise their Minds towards Heaven, and teach them without any carnal Helps to rely on him alone. For we do not find that then there were any Prophets among them, or that they ever after relaps'd into Idolatry. From that time the Hopes of another Life began to shine brighter upon their Minds, since they saw the most strict Observers of the Law to fall into the same Misfortunes that were threaten'd to the Transgressors of it. And thus by degrees were they prepared for the Reception of the Gospel.

But here it may be ask'd, Whether no Man was justified by the Law? *Ans.* St. Paul has determin'd this Question for us; for all along in his Epistles to the *Romans* and *Galatians* he informs us, that no Man is justified by the Works of the Law; and that if Righteousness were by the Law, Christ had died in vain. Two Questions answered.

Again it may be ask'd, Whether none of those, who liv'd under the Law, attain'd to Justification and Eternal Life? *Ans.* To this we reply in the Affirmative; for there is a great deal of Difference between attaining Justification under the Law, and attaining it by the Force and Virtue of the Law. We believe farther, that all those who sought after God with their whole Heart, are Partakers of true Justification and Eternal Life not by virtue of the Law, but by Grace promis'd

in Christ, and shadowed forth in the Types and Figures of the Old Testament, of which Grace some had a clearer View than others, and could see through the Type to the thing typified, and behold the Promises of Salvation by Jesus Christ, tho' at a distance. Upon the whole matter we may conclude, that the Law without Christ could contribute nothing towards perfect Justification. And from hence 'tis likewise apparent, that tho' the Law be sometimes stiled the Everlasting Covenant, yet God never designed it should last for ever; but that upon the bringing in of a better Hope, it shou'd be abrogated and vanish away.

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school-
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But here another Question arises, *viz.* Whether at present among Christians the Law be our School-master to bring us to Christ? This indeed is the Opinion of some, who suppose that Men are first to be terrified by the Threatnings of the Law, but not to despair, that so they may betake themselves to the Mercy of God in Christ. But these Men do mightily mistake the Meaning of St. Paul's Words: For he does not say, that the Law should always be our Schoolmaster; but only has regard to the Time past before the Birth of Christ, and tells us that *then* it did perform that Office: And especially with respect to the Ceremonies, the Types of Christ, and upon the account of that imperfect Grace, which put them upon seeking that which was more perfect, to be met with in Christ alone. Now it is ridiculous, that Men, who know themselves to be freed from the Obligation and Threats of the Law, should yet desire to be terrified by them. Nor is it to the purpose to say, that the Gospel makes use of the Threatnings of the Law to deter Sinners, since it has no occasion for such Assistance, having weightier and more grievous Denunciations of its own to terrify the Impenitent, than any contain'd in the Law; such for instance are the express Threatnings of the Eternal Torments of Hell-fire. But this Error is owing to another, whereby 'tis supposed, that the Law contains only Precepts, the Gospel only Promises; which erroneous Doctrine we will refute in another Place.

From all that has hitherto been said, it appears, that none of the Methods made use of by God before the Coming

Coming of his Son Jesus Christ, were of themselves effectual for the delivering of Men from their Misery, and that whatever Efficacy was in them; was all derived from the Grace that was to be offer'd in Christ: And from hence is evinc'd the Necessity of the Work of Redemption.

C H A P. II.

Of the Impulsive or Moving Cause of the Work of Redemption, viz. The Mercy mix'd with the Justice of God.

HAVING at large consider'd the Misery of all Mankind, as the occasion of the Work of Redemption, it follows that we should now enquire into the Impulsive Cause thereof, which was the Grace and Mercy of God; as we are abundantly inform'd in Scripture'. And this Grace proceeded from the Free-will of God form'd by no other's Counsel, and rais'd by no good Deeds of Men, or any precedent Love, nor with any Hopes of reaping any Advantage from Men. Hence this Grace is said to be effected for us, *according to the good Pleasure of his Will¹; according to the good Pleasure which he had purpos'd in himself²; after the Counsel of his own Will³; and according to his own purpose⁴: for who (says the Apostle) hath been his Counsellor? Or who hath first given to him, and it shall be recompens'd to him again⁵?* From hence 'tis plain, that the Love of God towards Mankind, was not founded on such Motives as our Love generally is, but was undeserved, voluntary, and on that account it was LOVE in the highest degree.

The Grace of God the Impulsive Cause of Redemption.

However this Divine Love had some Mixture of Justice in it, which consisted in this: That God per-

But mix'd with Justice.

¹ Joh. 3. 16. Rom. 3. 23. Eph. 2. 3, 4, 5, 6. Tit. 3. 3, 4, 5. 1 Pet. 1. 3. 1 Joh. 4. 9, 10. and elsewhere. ² Eph. 1. 5. ³ V. 9. ⁴ V. 11. ⁵ 2 Tim. 1. 9. ⁶ Rom. 11. 34, 35.

ceiving Mankind laps'd into Sin, and under the Condemnation of Eternal Death, was pleas'd to pardon Man, and to be reconciled to him by means of an Expiatory Sacrifice, without which he would not receive Sinners into his Grace and Favour. To this end he sent a Redeemer into the World, who should not only by his Doctrine convert Men from their Sins to God, but likewise by the Sacrifice of himself should expiate their Sins, and reconcile them to God. Thus there was an evident Mixture of the Divine Grace and Justice. The Grace of God appears in this, (1.) That he gave to Men a Priest or Redeemer, who could not depute one for themselves, and by this means shew'd himself reconcilable, and acted graciously with Mankind. (2.) Because he admitted of the Sacrifice of this Redeemer for Men, as a full Expiation of, and Satisfaction for all their Sins. His Justice appears, (1.) In that he would have this Sacrifice be perform'd by the cruel and accursed Death of his own beloved and innocent Son Jesus Christ, as an Expiatory Sacrifice for Sin; by which Method he gave us the highest Demonstration of his Hatred to Sin, since he spared not his own Son, when he stood in the place of, and interceded for Sinners. (2.) In that he required Repentance from Men, as the necessary Condition, without which none should be a Partaker of the Benefits of this Sacrifice. By this Method of Redemption God has secur'd his Justice, as well as exercis'd his Mercy; he has at the same time he pardons the Sinner, prevented him from committing any Sin for the future; and given us sufficient occasion to tremble at his Justice, even whilst he embraces us in the Arms of his Mercy.

no Que-
es an-
wered.

But here it may be ask'd, How can these things be consistent, to offer Grace, and to give a Propitiatory Sacrifice? For he who gives a Sacrifice, that he may exert Grace, gives it to himself, which seems to be trifling and superfluous. *Ans.* God gives not the Sacrifice but the Priest, in giving of whom he shews himself to be reconcilable; tho by this means he was not as yet pacified. It was therefore farther requisite, that the Priest should offer up some Sacrifice, and that by the suffering of a cruel and ignominious Death. Here therefore the Priest gives something of his own, since he

he not only dies, and returns to God the Life which he had received of him; but does it with the greatest Pain of Body and Anguish of Mind, which he freely and voluntarily took upon himself; and this voluntary Suffering of Death enhances the Dignity of it, so as to render it a Propitiatory Sacrifice for Sin in the Sight of God.

Another Question may be ask'd, *viz.* How God can be said to be pacified, who already when he sent his Son into the World loved Men, and had an Intention of saving them? as 'tis express'd, *Joh. 3. 16. 1 Joh. 4. 10.* *Ans.* That Intention of saving Men was only a bare Affection and unaccomplish'd Will: But upon the Death of Christ there followed an effectual Reconciliation on God's part, whereby he is prepared to bestow Pardon of Sin and Eternal Life on Men, upon condition that they believe in his Son: So that God, who shew'd himself reconcilable by sending Christ into the World, was truly reconciled by the Death of his Son.

C H A P. III.

Of the Instrument, or Redeemer, by whose Mediation the Redemption of Mankind was wrought by God.

WE are next to treat of the Instrumental Cause of Man's Redemption, *i. e.* of the Redeemer; who is Jesus Christ the Son of God, who before, at, and after his Birth, is stiled *Jesus*, or *the Saviour*. But that we may discourse the more fully of this Matter, we shall consider in so many distinct Sections, (1.) The Fore-runner of our Saviour, *John the Baptist*. (2.) The Person of *Jesus Christ*. (3.) His State of Humiliation. And (4.) His State of Exaltation.

The Instrument of Redemption, Jesus Christ.

S E C T. I.

Of John the Baptist.

John the
Baptist the
Fore-runner
of Christ.

Whereas this Work of Redemption was most Divine, Excellent, and Holy, and foretold so many Ages before by God, in order to raise in the Minds of Men an Expectation thereof; it pleas'd him in the fullness of time, when he had decreed to send his Son the Redeemer of the World, to depute beforehand a Fore-runner, who should prepare the Minds of Men for a due Reception of this Saviour, and bear Testimony to him. This Fore-runner was *John the Baptist*, of whom we shall consider, (1.) The Dignity of his Person. (2.) His Office.

The Dignity of his Person.

1. As to the Dignity of his Person, without mentioning his being born of the Family of *Aaron*, or the Sacerdotal Race, even after the Scepter had departed from *Judah*, and the Descendants of *David*; we shall only insist upon some more peculiar Privileges attending his Birth, such as these: (1.) His Birth was foretold several Ages before it happen'd¹. (2.) His Birth was miraculous, being born of an aged Father and a barren Mother. (3.) He was filled with the Holy Ghost from the very Womb. This man was prepared for his Office, not by working of Miracles, for we read of none that he ever did; but by his austere way of Living, drinking no Wine or Strong Drink, living in the Desert, clothed with Camels Hair, and feeding upon such things as he met with in the Wilderness; so that by this Austerity he might be justly stiled a second *Elias*. Being thus prepared, God sent him forth to preach for preparing the way of the Lord, according to that of *Isaiah*, *The Voice of one crying in the Wilderness, Prepare ye the Way of the Lord, make his Paths strait*².

His Office.

2. As to his Office, it consisted chiefly in these two things, in declaring the Doctrine which prepared the

¹ Mal. 3. 1. & 4. 5. ² If. 40. 3.

Way of the Lord Jesus, and in bearing Testimony to him as the true *Messiah*.

As to the former of these, two things are considerable, the Doctrine it self, and the External Rite of Baptism which fully shadowed out this Doctrine.

The Doctrine contains in it the Precept of Repentance, and the Promise of Remission of Sins, according to that of St. *Mark*, *John did baptize in the Wilderness, and preach the Baptism of Repentance for the Remission of Sins*¹.

This Doctrine he typified by Baptism, a Rite received indeed before by the *Jews*, but never before St. *John's* Time made use of to shadow out to them Repentance and Remission of Sins. As to that nice Enquiry, Whether the Baptism of *John* was of the same kind with that of Christ and his Apostles, and whether those who were baptiz'd by *John*, were rebaptiz'd when they were converted to Christianity, we think it more proper to be discuss'd when we come to treat of the Doctrine of Baptism.

The other Part of *John's* Office was to bear Testimony to the Lord Jesus, that he was the promis'd *Messiah*; which ought to have had the greater Influence upon the *Jews*, since they all looked upon him as a Prophet. And that he might with the greater Assurance attest this Truth, he had it reveal'd to him by God after a more especial manner². Now how faithful *John* was in bearing his Testimony, appears from hence; (1.) That tho the *Jews* had their Minds fix'd upon him, as if he were the promis'd *Messiah*, yet he ingenuously declared before them all that he was not the Christ, and that *there was one to come after him, the Latchets of whose Shoes he was not worthy to unloose*. (2.) That he continued in bearing this Testimony even to the Death.

To this it may be objected, that, *Matt. 11. 3.* we *An Objec-* read that *John* when in Prison sent some to Jesus with *tion an-* this Question, *Art thou he that should come, or do we siver'd.* look for another? from whence it seems as if it may be infer'd that *John* towards the end of his Life doubted

¹ Mar. 1. 4. See likewise Mat. 3. 2. Luk. 3. 3. ² Joh. 1. 31, 32, 33, 34.

of the Truth of his Testimony. *Answ.* This cannot be concluded from St. *John's* Message, since our Saviour himself says that he was not *like a Reed shaken with the Wind*. The former Part therefore of his Message ought to be understood as a Confession, *Thou art he that should come*: Or if it be put by way of Question, 'tis not to be suppos'd that St. *John* moved it for his own Information, but for the Conviction of his Disciples, and of all those who were present when the Question was ask'd, that Jesus was the true *Messiah*.

S E C T. II.

Of the Person of Jesus Christ.

From what has been said of the Dignity of the Fore-runner of our Saviour, may be infer'd in some measure the Dignity of our Redeemer. But for the clearer apprehending thereof, we shall in this Section treat more distinctly of his Person.

Christ
signifies
Anointed.

Our Saviour is stiled *Jesus Christ*; *Jesus* denotes Saviour, and *Christ* Anointed. For God was pleas'd that the Redeemer should perform his Offices of Prophet, Priest, and King, as was most usual among the *Jews*. Now both Kings and Prophets were by the express Command of God anointed with Oil. Accordingly our *Jesus*, for the due Performance of those Offices, was to be Anointed; or the *Christ*; from whence We of his Religion are call'd *Christians*. However he was not anointed with material Oil, but with the Holy Ghost.

Is God and
Man in one
Person.

But in treating of the Person of our Saviour, 'tis necessary to take notice of the Dignity thereof. He is therefore the True and Eternal God by a secret and ineffable Generation from the Father, and upon this account is stiled *the only begotten Son of God*. He is likewise in the same Person, by the Hypostatical Union, perfect Man, or the Son of Man. But having already (*B. 2. Ch. 5. Sect. 1.*) discours'd of the Divine Nature of Jesus Christ, we shall at present confine our selves to those things that more immediately relate to his Human Nature.

That

That he was true Man, and really partook of the same Human Nature with other Men, is very evident from Scripture, wherein he is call'd, not only *the Man Christ Jesus*¹, but also *the Seed of the Woman*², *the Seed of Abraham*³, *made of the Seed of David according to the Flesh*⁴, and *made of a Woman*⁵. Hence it is that he styles himself very often *the Son of Man*, thereby denoting that he was truly Man. Add to this, that his Mother bore him in her Womb; and when her full time, according to the manner of other Women, was come, she brought him forth into the World. Nor is it a less Argument of his Humanity, that he was subject to the same Infirmities of Body, and the same Passions of Mind as we are; so that he was in all things made like unto us, Sin only excepted.

Tho this be so evident a Truth, yet we thought it requisite to establish it by the foregoing Texts of Scripture, in order to refute the Opinion of some Christians, Eutychicall'd *Eutychians*, who maintain that the Human Nature of Christ was not produc'd of the Flesh and Blood of the Virgin *Mary*; but that the Divine Essence of the Son of God, or the Eternal Word, was transubstantiated into Flesh, and that it was derived from some celestial or uncreated Matter, and transmitted into the Virgin's Womb; and by this means the Son of God remain'd what he was, and was made what he was not.

Now the Weakness of this Opinion appears not only from the Texts of Scripture before alledg'd, but also from its own Absurdity. For (1.) it is a manifest Contradiction for any thing to remain what it is, and to be changed into what it is not. (2.) 'Tis as absurd to say that a Material Essence was made of one purely Immaterial, Mortal of Immortal, Flesh and Bones of mere Spirit. (3.) For as much as Man is compos'd of a Body and a Soul, it was requisite that the Divine Essence of the Son should be changed partly into an Immortal Soul, partly into Mortal Flesh: Or if they would have it chang'd only into Flesh, be-

¹ 1 Tim. 2. 5. ² Gen. 3. 15. ³ Gal. 3. 16. ⁴ Rom. 1. 3.
⁵ 2 Tim. 2. 8. Acts 2. 30. ⁶ Gal. 4. 4.

cause 'tis said, *the Word was made Flesh*, it follows that it was turn'd into Flesh devoid of Soul and Spirit, which alone was the Son of God; and that a Soul was infus'd into it, which should quicken and govern it. (4.) And lastly, 'tis necessary that they own one of these two things, either that the Essence of the Son was not the same with the Father, which they do not assert; or if it be the same, then when the Essence of the Son was chang'd into Flesh, the Essence of the Father was chang'd into Flesh likewise; and when the Son died, the whole Divine Essence died too: and by this means, upon the Death of Christ, the World was without a God for three days together. All these, with several others of the like nature, are monstrous Absurdities: Not that we charge it upon them as their genuine Opinion, but as the Consequences thereof; and therefore would desire them to beware of an Opinion, which has such fatal and absurd Consequences flowing from it.

Some Objections answered. However in defence of their Opinion they usually produce some Places of Scripture, which we shall briefly examine.

In the first place they say, that the Lord Jesus was not born after the manner of other Men, but conceived of the Holy Ghost. *Ans.* There can no Inference be drawn from hence in favour of their Opinion; for Christ is only said to be conceived of the Holy Ghost, because the Holy Ghost by a peculiar Power made the Flesh and Blood of *Mary* so fruitful, as out of it, as the Material Cause, the Body of Christ should be form'd.

Secondly they produce *John* 1. 14. where we read, *The Word was made Flesh*; which they say signifies nothing else but that the Word was chang'd into Flesh; for that is the meaning of being made. *Ans.* The true and genuine Sense of this Place is, that the Word was Flesh, that is, a true fleshly Substance, subject to all those Infirmities to which our Flesh is liable: That is to say, Jesus Christ was mortal, of a mean and despicable Condition; which more especially appear'd in the Days of his Passion and Death, which are therefore call'd *the Days of his Flesh*¹.

¹ Heb. 5. 7.

Thirdly they alledg the Words of the Apostle, 1 Cor. 15. 47. *The first Man is of the Earth earthy, the second Man is the Lord from Heaven.* Answ. The Apostle does not here speak of Christ as born of the Virgin *Mary*, nor of the Body which he deriv'd from her; but of Christ as rais'd from the Dead to Eternal Life, and of his glorified Body which he has now in Heaven. This is very plain from the whole Series of this Chapter, not to mention the Absurdities which follow from their Interpretation of the Words.

Upon the whole matter therefore we conclude, that the Flesh of the Lord Jesus, like that of other Men, was produc'd of the Flesh and Blood of his Mother *Mary*; only with this Difference, that he was not born, as other Men are, by the Conjunction of a Man and a Woman, but by the Power of the Holy Ghost miraculously overshadowing the Virgin *Mary*; upon which account it is, even with respect to his Human Nature, that he was call'd by the Angel *the Son of God*¹. And we are firmly to believe that Jesus Christ was true M A N, not only because he is in Scripture expressly so call'd; but also, because he died for us, and by his Death procured a Reconciliation for us with the Father, and saved us from our Sins: which we could never believe of him, had he not been M A N. Add to this, that God exhibited him to us as an Example of Obedience, and of attaining Everlasting Salvation by the Resurrection from the Dead, if we endeavour by persevering in Holiness to tread in his Steps: But if he had not been M A N, he could have given us no Example of this Gracious and Divine Will. So that they who antiently in the Christian Church denied our Lord Jesus to be truly Flesh, and to partake of our Human Nature, such as the *Marcionites*, *Cerdonians*, *Manichees*, and others, and who asserted that our Lord did not really die, but only in appearance seem'd in the Apprehension of the *Jews* to suffer, have miserably perverted the Oeconomy of our Salvation, and subverted the very Foundation of it.

¹ Luke 1. 35.

S E C T. III.

Of Christ in his State of Humiliation, and herein of his Death, Burial, and Descent into Hell.

Before we proceed to the Offices of Jesus Christ, whereby he wrought out the Work of Redemption, it will be requisite to consider the different States or Conditions wherein he performed it.

The two-fold State of Christ.

The State of Jesus Christ is twofold, *viz.* of his Humiliation and Exaltation, both of them describ'd *Phil. 2. 6—11.* His State or Condition in this World was very mean and despicable from his very Birth; being born of a poor Virgin in a Stable, and laid in a Manger; after which he liv'd in Poverty, and was expos'd to the Reproaches and Affronts of many. But the Scripture chiefly places his State of Humiliation in his Passion and Death, in that he *emptied himself, took upon him the Form of a Servant, and was obedient to Death, even the Death of the Cross*.

Three degrees of his Humiliation.

Now there are three degrees of this State of Humiliation to be considered. (1.) His Death, with the Passion that preceded it. (2.) His Burial. (3.) His Descent into Hell.

1. His Death and Passion.

1. As to the first degree, *viz.* his Death and Passion, two things are considerable, the Grievousness and the Manner of it.

The Grievousness of it in Body and Mind.

For a full view of the Grievousness of it, we shall consider what he suffer'd both in his Body and in his Soul. (1.) In his Body he suffer'd the most exquisite Pains and Torments; being betrayed by *Judas Iscariot* one of his own Disciples; apprehended and bound like a common Malefactor; buffeted, scourged and spit upon, derided and mock'd by the People, the Soldiers, and at last by the High Priests; and after all he was nailed to the Cross, on which he hung several Hours, and then gave up the Ghost. And here it is to be noted, that this Death was not only violent and cruel, but also ignominious and reproachful, and accur-

fed. (2.) The Sufferings of his Mind app
those grievous Agonies he felt, first in the G
Gethsemane, just before his Apprehension, where ⁴²
Soul was exceeding sorrowful even unto Death, where
he sweat as it were Drops of Blood, and pray'd his
Father thrice with great Vehemence and Earnestness,
that if it were possible that bitter Cup might pass from
him. After this, when he hung upon the Cross, in the
Anguish of his Soul, he broke out into that passionate
Exclamation, *My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?*

But here it may be ask'd, Whether Jesus Christ suf- *That he*
fered the Torments of the damn'd, or as others please to *did not su*
phrase it, of those who were to be damn'd? So indeed *fer the To*
some maintain, that God the Father laid the Sins of all *ments of*
the Elect upon his Son, exacted the Punishment of them, *the Dam*
and that Christ suffered the Punishment of them in *ned.*
the Garden and upon the Cross. Others of them are
so bold as to say, that Christ before his Death suffered
the Pains or Torments of Hell in his Soul: That he
was not only insensible of that Joy and Confidence
which arises from Faith, but instead thereof felt that
Pressure and Vexation of Spirit, which proceeded
from the Wrath of God, not indeed against himself ab-
solutely, but as he was the Sponsor or Surety for us.

Now this Opinion is manifestly false, repugnant to
Right Reason and Scripture, and a downright Re-
proach cast upon the Lord Jesus, and God the Father
himself. For the proof of this, we shall distinctly and
briefly inquire into the Torments of the Damned, and
shew that Jesus suffered none of them. These Punish-
ments are commonly reckon'd to be four, Eternal
Death, Infinite Torments, a Sense of the Divine Wrath,
and Desperation. (1.) That Jesus did not suffer Eter-
nal Death, is manifest, in that he rose from the Dead
the third Day; and 'tis very trifling to distinguish be-
tween the Extent and Intenseness of this Death, since
Eternity denotes the former, and not the latter.
(2.) Nor did he endure infinite Torments; since the Tor-
ments of the Damned are so stiled because of their Ex-
tent or Eternal Duration, and are usually ascribed to the
Everlasting Fire which cannot be quenched, into
which the Lord Jesus was not cast. (3.) Much less

did he feel the Wrath of God when he suffer'd, since by that Act he shew'd himself after an extraordinary manner obedient to the Father, and therefore was highly belov'd by him. Hence it is that he says of himself, *Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my Life, that I might take it again*¹. 'Tis likewise said, that *he gave himself for us, an Offering and Sacrifice to God, for a sweet-smelling Savour*²; and that *therefore he was so highly exalted by the Father*³. As to what they say of his suffering the Wrath of God as our Sponsor or Surety, of his being a Curse for us, and of his complaining that he was left by the Father; this makes nothing to the purpose: since by the fore-mention'd places of Scripture it appears that he was so far from being hated, that as he was our Surety he was absolutely beloved by the Father; that indeed he is said to be made a Curse for us, but 'tis upon the account of that accursed Death which he suffer'd, and not that the Father cursed him; and the forsaking of God, of which he so pathetically complains, was not such a Dereliction by which God abandons the Wicked, but only a forsaking for a season, by which he withdraws that Comfort whereby the Faithful are used to be supported under their Afflictions; which is far from being a Token of the Divine Wrath. (4.) And lastly, our Lord Jesus did not suffer Desperation, the inseparable Attendant of the Punishment of the Damn'd, because by his Passion he was highly obedient to the Father, and in the midst of his severest Passion and deepest Agonies he still put his Confidence in him; as appears by his Resignation in the Garden, by his calling upon God on the Cross, his Discourse with the Thief, and his recommending his Spirit into the hands of his Father.

An Objection answered.

But to this they urge, How did he free us from eternal Death and the Punishments of the Damned, if he himself did not suffer them? To this I answer, (1.) That they themselves by this Objection do presuppose, that the Lord could not deliver us from any Punishments, unless in suffering them himself in our stead

¹ Job: 10. 17. ² Eph. 5. 2. ³ Phil. 2. 9.

he obtain'd this Deliverance for us. This being premis'd, I say that they themselves do confirm the Accusation with which they are charg'd. For I would ask them, whether Desperation be not one of those Punishments that are due to the Sins of the Elect? Either then Jesus has not deliver'd his Elect from Desperation, which according to them is manifestly false : or according to this Supposition, our Saviour suffer'd Desperation in their stead, which however they stily deny. (2.) We have already prov'd that our Saviour did not suffer the Punishments of the Damned; nor was it necessary, because his Death was the Sacrifice for our Sins. Now it is not necessary that the Sacrifice should be equivalent in all things, as is apparent by the Sacrifices of the Old Testament; 'tis only requisite that an Oblation and Intercession should be made for the Satisfaction of him who is offended by the Sin, that so a gratuitous Remission of Sin might be obtain'd, as we shall shew more largely hereafter.

Again, it may be ask'd, If our Saviour did not suffer the Pains of Hell, whence proceeded that extreme Horror and Dread with which he was seiz'd? *Ansiv.* Because upon his approaching Passion, all the Horrors of that Passion and his Death presented themselves at once to his View : And because he was a Man like unto us in all things, and subject to our Infirmities, 'tis no such wonder that he should be seiz'd with Dread at so dismal a Scene of things which was livelily represented to him. As to what is urg'd, that such a Dread seems to be unworthy of the Lord Jesus, since herein he would be less courageous than many Martyrs, of whose Constancy, nay, rejoicing and singing in the midst of the flames, such wonderful things are related in the Martyrologies. To this we answer, (1.) That we are not sure of the Truth of all that is related in the Martyrologies, for those who wrote them may have heighten'd the Bravery of the Martyrs for the encouragement of others. (2.) 'Tis probable that the Martyrs might, when brought out before the People, offer a violence to themselves, conceal their Dread, and shew their Courage to excite others to imitate them : whilst in secret their Fears were as great, and their Agonies as strong as those of other Men, and which

*A Quer
answere*

Historians might either through Ignorance or Design have omitted. (3.) Supposing all the Relations of this nature were true, as we are certain some of them were, 'tis to be ascribed to the Special Operation of the Holy Ghost, who so far corroborated their Minds by the hopes of the Rewards of Heaven, that being intent upon the Excellency thereof, they chearfully bore up under all Pains and Torments. Whereas God did not think fit to allow at first so great a Favour to his Son, but left him to himself, and that for wise and good Reasons, such as these. (1.) That if at any time we should be called to suffer for the Name of Christ, and should not meet with that Alacrity of Mind with which some Martyrs chearfully embraced the Stake, but should rather be seiz'd with a Damp upon our Spirits, yet we should not from thence conclude our selves less acceptable to God, or to have done any thing unbecoming Christians: provided we, like Christ, resign our selves absolutely to the Will of God, and pray with him, *Not our Will, but thine, O God, be done.* (2.) That *he might be a faithful High-Priest* with God, who might *be touched with the feeling of our Infirmities*; and having been tempted, *he might be able and willing to succour them that are tempted*'. (3.) To these Reasons of Christ's Dread and Horrour at his approaching Passion, we may add a third, which a Divine of our Church has prov'd by several Arguments to be highly probable *, and the Sum of what he offers amounts to this: " That the Damp which seiz'd our
 " Saviour before his Death, the Sorrow which he ex-
 " press'd, the importunate Request which he made for
 " the diverting of the bitter Cup, and the Agony
 " which he suffer'd in the Garden, were owing to a
 " greater Cause than that of the Prospect of Death,
 " or the natural Fear of dying. That the Devil, who
 " upon Christ's entring upon his Prophetical Office,
 " had assaulted him, and tempted his Innocence, in this
 " Agony in the Garden gathered all his Powers

* Heb. 2. 18. & 4. 15.

* *Dr. Scott's Christian Life*, Par. 2. Vol. 2. Ch. 7. Sect. 10.
 concerning the Ministers of Christ's Kingdom.

“ of Darkness together to make a last Effort upon him.
 “ That in all probability he was furrounded with a
 “ mighty Host of Devils, who exercis'd all their
 “ Power and Malice to persecute his innocent Soul, to
 “ distract and fright it with horrid Phantasms, to af-
 “ flict it with dismal Apprehensions, and vex and cru-
 “ ciate it with dire Imaginations and dreadful Specta-
 “ cles: And lastly, That it was the prospect of this
 “ Struggle and Conflict with the Powers of Darkness,
 “ with whom he was to engage singly, and no more
 “ than one Angel (as we read of) to assist him,
 “ which caus'd that inexpressible Anguish upon his
 “ Soul, an Anguish that sunk and depress'd him into
 “ as deep a Dejection, as it was possible for an innocent
 “ Mind to endure, and to which he gave a liberal
 “ Vent both at his Eyes and Lips, in Tears, and Sighs,
 “ and sorrowful Complaints.”

Having thus treated at large of the Grievousness of *The Man-
 Christ's Passion*, we are next to consider the Manner *ner of
 of it*; which offers these three Particulars to our Me- *Christ's
 ditation.* *Passion.*

First, That he suffer'd according to the Will of his Father, as appears, (1.) Because the Father is not only said to have sent him into the World, but more expressly that *he gave him* ¹. (2.) Because he will'd his Death ². (3.) Hence the Son is said by his Death to have been *obedient to the Father*. Why God will'd it, has been in part already, but shall be more fully explain'd hereafter.

Secondly, He suffer'd all those things freely, and with a voluntary Obedience, and without constraint, as is apparent by all the Circumstances which preceded and attended his Death. He went up to *Jerusalem* of his own accord, tho he had foretold his Disciples that there he should be betrayed, taken, crucified and put to Death. Upon his Apprehension, tho he might have cast down his Enemies at his feet by a word's speaking, and pray'd his Father for more than twelve Legions of Angels to have defended him, yet he vo-

¹ John 3. 16. Acts 2. 23. Rom. 8. 32. 1 John 4. 9, 10.
² Heb. 10. 5, 6, 7. John 10. 18.

luntarily deliver'd himself into their hands, confess'd he was Jesus whom they sought, and would not suffer his Disciples to rescue him, but reprov'd one of them who drew a Sword in his Defence. Nor is it to any purpose for the proving that Jesus did not freely lay down his Life, to alledg that Text which says our Saviour pray'd thrice, *that if it were possible, that Cup might pass from him.* Since *Cup* in this place does not mean his Death, that being decreed before by God, but may be understood of those Troubles and Anguishes of Mind which he then felt in the Agony, and pray'd to be freed from. But supposing that *Cup* should mean Death, yet it is not from hence rightly infer'd, that Jesus declin'd it: The words only shew that natural Aversion to Death and Pain, which is common to all Men, and which the stoutest Heart cannot but have experienc'd.

Thirdly and lastly, He suffer'd innocently, as is plain from the whole Process drawn up against him. Having nothing to accuse him of, false Witnesses were suborn'd against him: These disagreeing in their Evidence, and producing nothing worthy of Death, the High Priest adjures him to tell him whether he were the Christ, and for the ingenuous Confession of this Truth (for bearing Testimony to which, he was sent into the World) he was condemn'd. When he was deliver'd up to *Pilate*, he quickly perceiv'd his Innocence, and the Envy of the *Jews*; freely own'd to the Chief Priests that he found no fault in him; and when they still cry'd, *Crucify him, Crucify him*, he wash'd his hands, openly protesting that he was innocent of that Man's Blood. Add to this, that the Centurion, who with a Guard of Soldiers stood by the Cross, and saw what was done with the Signs that follow'd, cry'd out, *Truly this was the Son of God.*

2. The next Degree of Christ's Humiliation was his Burial, whereby God was pleas'd to give the World an undeniable Argument of Jesus's real Death, and consequently create in us an indubitable Belief of his Resurrection, both which were of so great a concern to establish our Faith.

Now the Certainty of his Death is evinc'd by the various Circumstances of his Burial. For, (1.) before he was

Christ's
Burial.

was bury'd God was willing that a strict Inquiry should be made whether he were truly dead or no ; first by the Soldiers, who did not break his Legs as they did those of the two Malefactors, perceiving that he was dead already, and one of them pierc'd his Side with a Spear, out of which issu'd forth Water and Blood : And then by *Pilate*, who before he would deliver his Body to *Joseph of Arimathea*, ask'd the Centurion whether he were already dead. (2.) The Body of Christ, before his Burial, was embalm'd after the manner of the *Jews*, and wrap'd in fine Linen by *Nicodemus* and *Joseph of Arimathea*, for the more decent Interment thereof ; as it is exactly related by all the Evangelists. (3.) He was laid in a new Sepulcher, wherein no Man before was laid ; lest upon his rising again from the Dead some other should have been suppos'd to have risen, or that he reviv'd by virtue of the Bones of some Saint that lay bury'd there before, as was the Case of the Man that was cast into *Elisba's* Sepulcher¹. (4.) The Chief Priests of the *Jews* desir'd, and *Pilate* granted them to seal the Sepulcher, and to set a Guard about it², lest by Fraud or Violence his Disciples should take away the Body of Jesus : which preposterous Care of those Men God thought fit to direct to quite another End, viz. That all this Care of detaining Christ in his Sepulcher, should be an irresistible Evidence of the Truth of his Resurrection ; as we shall shew hereafter.

3. The third and last degree of Christ's Humiliation, is the detaining of his Body in the Sepulcher to the third Day ; not for three whole Days, but part of the first and third, and the whole second ; during which time he was as it were under the Power and Bonds of Death, and was really in *Hades*, that is, the state of the Dead. This we look upon to be the true meaning of that part of the Apostles Creed, *He descended into Hell*. True it is, this Article was not antiently read in several Creeds, and at present there is a great Contest among Christians about the meaning thereof. But without entring into the Detail of this Controversy, we

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¹ 2 Kings 13. 21. ² Mat. 27. 66.

shall only take notice of, and refute the Interpretation which the *Romanists* give of it.

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They, insisting on the proper Signification of the Latin word *Infernum*, tell us, "That by this is meant a certain Place under ground wherein the Souls are confin'd as it were in a Prison. They likewise maintain four kinds of Punishment after Death, *viz.* of Loss or Sense, and those either Temporal or Eternal; and accordingly they allot to each a particular Place within the Earth, wherein it is suffer'd. The very Centre of the Earth they tell us is Hell, the place where the Damn'd, or those who die without the Pardon of Mortal Sin, are punish'd with the everlasting Torment of Sense. Round this they say is Purgatory, the Place of Temporal Punishment, wherein the Souls of those who die with Venial Sins about them, or have not in this Life perform'd the Temporal Penances inflicted on them for Mortal Sins, are purg'd, till after such Purgation they are received into Heaven. About these places, they farther tell us, are two *Limbo's*, wherein the Souls are kept as in Prisons, without any Sense of Pain. The *Limbo* next to Purgatory, say they, detains the Souls of Infants dying without Baptism for ever. In the outermost *Limbo* were kept the Souls of the Fathers who believed under the Old Testament, till the Death of Christ, which now, say they, is empty. By the Descent therefore of Christ into Hell, they understand his Entrance into this *Limbus Patrum*, from whence they assert that he return'd in Triumph attended with all the Souls of the Fathers, and the penitent Thief, to whom he said, *This Day shalt thou be with me in Paradise.*" Now what a sort of romantick Account is this? Does not this Fiction of Hell, and the several places of Torment under ground, look more like the Fables of Heathen Poets, than an Article of Christian Faith? For (1.) there is no mention made in Scripture of any such *Limbo*; therein we are no where taught that the Souls were detain'd as Prisoners within the Bowels of the Earth: On the contrary 'tis said, *That the Spirit shall return unto God who*

gave it. (2.) Supposing the Opinion of the *Romanists* to be true, the Descent of Christ into Hell would have been a glorious and triumphant Action, whereas it appears from Scripture ' to be a State of the greatest Humiliation.

However the Papists, and especially *Bellarmino* their great Champion, produce several Places of Scripture in favour of this *Limbus Patrum*, but so foreign to the purpose, and so wretchedly perverted, that it would be labour lost to mention, much more to refute them. We shall only take notice of one, which is the chiefeft and most intricate place, and which seems to be alledg'd in their favour with some colour of Reason. It is this, 1 Pet. 3. 18, 19, 20. *Christ also hath once suffered for Sins, the Just for the Unjust, (that he might bring us to God) being put to death in the Flesh, but quickened by the Spirit : By which also he went and preached unto the Spirits in Prison ; which sometimes were disobedient, when once the Long-suffering of God waited in the Days of Noah.* To this we reply, (1.) That this Text by *Bellarmino's* own Confession is very dark and obscure, and consequently no controverted Point of Faith can be establish'd upon it. (2.) That there are many things in this Text, which are against the Notion of a *Limbus Patrum*. But that this may appear more fully, we shall give you our Sense of the words, which (with Submission to better Judgments) we look upon to be this : That Jesus, when he was quicken'd, that is, rais'd from the Dead to immortal Life by the Spirit of God, by the same Spirit communicated to his Apostles went forth, and preach'd the Gospel to the *Gentiles*, who were strangers to the Knowledge of God. But that the *Gentiles* rejected this preaching, and thereby became like to those who formerly despis'd and were disobedient to the preaching of *Noah*, exhorting them to Repentance ; and therefore were held in Prison, *i. e.* in a State of Damnation. And as then a few, *i. e.* eight Souls only were saved in the Ark : So likewise now a few should be saved, *viz.* those who by the Answer of a good Con-

science, figur'd out by external Baptism, come unto God.

S E C T. IV.

Of Christ's State of Exaltation: And herein of his Resurrection, Ascension, and Session at the Right Hand of God.

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The State of Christ's Exaltation consists likewise of three Degrees ; First, his Resurrection from the Dead ; Secondly, his Ascension into Heaven ; and Thirdly, his Session at the right Hand of God.

I. In speaking to his Resurrection, we shall first of all evince the Truth of it ; then consider some of the principal Circumstances of it ; and lastly shew what Use we ought to make of this Doctrine.

As to the Truth and Reality of our Saviour's Resurrection, being the Foundation of the Christian Religion ', it is worth the while to prove it by several Arguments, in opposition to the *Jews* and other Infidels. Supposing then (what has been demonstrated) that Jesus Christ was really dead, we prove his Resurrection by this invincible and solid Argument. 'Tis certain that the Sepulcher of Jesus Christ was found empty not only by his Friends and Disciples, but even by his very Enemies : For if the latter had not found it so, certainly they would have produc'd the Body, and by this means have prov'd all the preaching of his Disciples concerning his Resurrection to have been an Imposture. It therefore follows that the Body of Christ was either taken out of the Sepulcher by Men, or rais'd by God. The former of these cannot be said; since either his Friends or his Enemies must have done it : But the one thro Interest would not, and the others for want of Power and Opportunity could not do such a thing. Therefore we conclude, that our Saviour was rais'd from the Dead by God the Father. What the *Jews* then urg'd of his Disciples

coming by night, whilst the Watch was asleep, and taking him away, is a ridiculous Subterfuge to cover their Infidelity. For how is it possible, that the Disciples who fled away from their Master out of fear, should have so much courage as to break through a Guard of Soldiers to carry off the dead Body out of the Sepulcher? Can it be suppos'd, that the Soldiers should all of them at once fall into so deep a sleep, as to let his Disciples have the opportunity not only of stealing him away, but also of unwrapping the Linen Clothes, and laying them in order in the Sepulcher? Add to this, that the Disciples of *Jesus* were never accus'd of any such Theft before the *Jewish* Sanhedrim; which is a manifest sign that the *Jews* were convinc'd of the Falshood of their Report, who said, that his Disciples came by night and stole him away.

The same thing is likewise confirm'd not only by the *By the* Testimony of two Angels, who proclaim'd his Resur- *postles* *I* rection to the Women who came with Spices to anoint *timony,* the Body of *Jesus* in the Sepulcher; but also by that *could no* of the Apostles, Witnesses beyond all exception in *be deceiv* this matter, since they could not be deceiv'd them- *themselves* selves, neither would they deceive others. They *and wou* could not be deceiv'd themselves, since our Saviour *not decei* shew'd himself alive to them several times after his *others.* Resurrection, and by the many Appearances he made fully convinc'd them of the Truth of it. Nor would they deceive others, since they seal'd this their Testimony with their Blood, nor could any Threatnings or Punishments deter them from their Constancy in bearing this Testimony. Now what wise Man would have endur'd what they did, if the thing they bore testimony to had been false, since they got nothing by it, but certain Death? Doubtless if this had been so, they would not only have been the worst, but the most foolish of Men.

The efficient Cause of the Resurrection of Christ *Its effici* is God the Father, as is evident from several places of *Cause.* Scripture, wherein 'tis said expressly of God, *That he raised up his Son Jesus from the Dead.* To these

may be added those other places, wherein the Resurrection of Christ is attributed to God, and by the Circumstances whereof it appears, that we are to understand it of the Father alone¹. Nay, God the Father is sometimes describ'd by this Paraphrase, *who raised Jesus from the Dead*². However, this raising of himself is also attributed to Christ. Thus he said unto the Jews, *Destroy this Temple, and in three Days I will raise it up*³. And again, *Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my Life that I might take it again: No Man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of my self. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This Commandment have I received from my Father*⁴. But the bare Inspection of these Places informs us, that the Father was the primary Cause of the Resurrection, and that our Lord Jesus had a power of raising himself from the Dead by virtue of the Divine Spirit which rested in him, and so was likewise the Cause of his own Resurrection, but subordinate to the Father.

As to the Circumstances of our Saviour's Resurrection, they are various. (1.) He rose on the third Day according to the Scriptures, and by the most wise Counsel of God. For had he risen before, the reality of his Death, and consequently of his Resurrection, might have been call'd in question; and had he remain'd longer in the Grave, the Apostles Faith would doubtless have been overthrown, since it was already wavering by reason of the Ignominy of his Death. (2.) He rose on the first Day of the Week, call'd upon that account *the Lord's Day*⁵; and at the first Hour of that Day, that is, according to our way of reckoning, at six in the Morning. (3.) An Earthquake attended his Resurrection. (4.) An Appearance of Angels was about the Sepulcher, not only to roll away the Stone from the door of it, but also to be Witnesses of Christ's Resurrection both to the Women who came to see the Body of Jesus, and to the

¹ Acts 2. 24, 32. 3. 15. 10. 40. 17. 31. Rom. 10. 9. 1 Cor. 15: 15. Heb. 13. 20. ² Rom. 4. 24. 8. 11. 2 Cor. 4. 14. ³ John 3. 19. ⁴ John 10. 17, 18. ⁵ Rev. 1. 10.

Keepers or Guards, who upon that glorious Apparition did shake, and became as dead Men¹.

But here it may be ask'd, With what sort of Body *That he* our Saviour arose, whether it was an immortal and *did not ri* glorified one? *with a gl* *rify'd Bea* *Ans^w.* Doubtless with the same Body with which he died, and still endu'd with the same Qualities and Attributes, since there still remain'd the Prints of the Wounds made at his Death²: And this was very requisite, that his Disciples might be convinc'd of his Resurrection; for if there had been so great a Change in the Body of Christ, they would have imagin'd that some other Person, and not their crucified Master, presented himself to their view. His Body indeed was so far immortal, as never to die any more, however it does not seem to have been glorify'd in his Resurrection, but at his Ascension.

In opposition to this, the *Romanists* maintain, that *The Ro-* the Body of Christ was glorify'd in his very Resur- *manists* rection; and for the proof of this, they attribute such *Opinion re* things to the Body of Christ rais'd from the Dead, as *futed.* are incompatible with the Nature of any but a glorify'd Body. For the further strengthening their Opinion, they add, (1.) That our Saviour pass'd through the Stone of the Sepulcher³. (2.) That he entred through the Doors which were shut to his Disciples⁴. And, (3.) That at *Emmans* he vanish'd out of their sight⁵. To the first of these Assertions we reply, that no mention is made of any such thing in the Gospel; on the contrary 'tis said, That *the Angel rolled away the Stone from the Sepulcher*, which doubtless was for no other end, but that Jesus might come out. As to the second place, 'tis said, that he came the Doors being shut, that is, he entred after an extraordinary manner, no Man opening the Doors to him; but not that he pass'd thro the Doors when shut, only he by his Divine Power open'd them, and so went in. By the last Instance we are to understand not his rendring himself invisible to the Disciples, but his sudden Departure from them, or that their Eyes were so held, that they did not mind

¹ Mat. 28. 4. ² Luke 24. 39, 40. John 20. 27. ³ Mat. 28. 2. ⁴ John 20. 26. ⁵ Luke 24. 31.

his Departing, no more than they knew him before in the Way.

*the Uses
of this
Doctrine.*

Now the Doctrine of our Saviour's Resurrection is of great Use, since (1.) it advanced the Glory of God, *he was raised from the Dead by*, or to *the Glory of the Father*¹; for therein God shewed the exceeding Greatness of his Power², in that he was able to raise the Dead to Life again; and 'tis upon this account that Christ is called *the Power of God*³. (2.) It was a Demonstration of Christ's being sent forth by God, and of the Divinity of his Doctrine: For being asked for a sign of his Divine Mission, he gave the *Jews* none other than this⁴. Now 'tis impossible, nay repugnant to the Holiness and Righteousness of God, for him to give such a miraculous Attestation to an Impostor, falsely boasting that he was sent from God, and appealing to his own Resurrection as a Proof of this his Mission. (3.) It was a Confirmation of the particular Article of the Resurrection of the Dead. For as the whole of his Doctrine was proved by his Resurrection to be Divine; so likewise this particular Article, which is an especial Promise of that Doctrine, is evinced thereby⁵. (4.) It demonstrated Death to be overcome by him, and our Sins fully expiated through him⁶. (5.) It was our Spiritual Resurrection from the Death of Sin to a New and Spiritual Life⁷. And this is no more than a Consequence of the former: For as the Resurrection of Christ is an undeniable Evidence of our Resurrection, if we walk in Newness of Life; so it is likewise a very powerful Motive to excite us to a Holiness of Life, that we may attain to that happy Resurrection.

*His As-
cension into
Heaven.*

II. Thus much for the Resurrection of Christ, we now proceed to the second Degree or Step of his Exaltation, *viz.* his Ascension into Heaven, which happen'd on the fortieth Day after his Resurrection, when he had shewed himself alive after his Death several times to his Apostles, eating and drinking with

¹ Rom. 6. 4. ² Eph. 1. 19. ³ 1 Cor. 1. 24. ⁴ Mat. 12. 28. John 2. 18. ⁵ John 6. 39, 40. & 14. 2, 3. ⁶ 1 Cor. 15. 17. Rom. 4. 25. ⁷ 1 Pet. 1. 3.

them, instructing them concerning the setting up a Spiritual Kingdom among them, and renewed his Promise of pouring upon them the Holy Ghost. This his Ascension into Heaven was a Local Motion truly and properly so call'd, whereby Jesus Christ was carried up from the Earth into Heaven, as is apparent by all the accounts we have of it in Scripture¹. So that here, as in all other Local Motions, two Terms are to be consider'd, viz. *Terminus a quo*, and *Terminus ad quem*, as the Philosophers speak. The *Terminus a quo*, or the Place from whence our Lord ascended, was the Earth, and more particularly Mount Olivet, which he seem'd more especially to pitch upon, that his Apostles being led out into a higher Place than ordinary, might have a full view of his Ascension without any thing to intercept their Sight. The *Terminus ad quem*, or the Place to which he ascended, was Heaven; not that wherein the Birds are, nor the Firmament wherein the Stars shine: But the highest Heaven, call'd *the third Heaven, Paradise, and the Throne of God*². This is evident from several Places of Scripture³.

The Truth of this Ascension is evinc'd by the Testimony of the Apostles, who all of them together saw him ascending into Heaven: for so 'tis expressly said, Acts 1. 9. *Whilst they beheld, he was taken up*; that is, not suddenly, or in a Tempest, as *Elijah* was formerly; but by degrees, that the Apostles might have an ocular Demonstration of his Ascension, and thereby be made the more unexceptionable Witnesses thereof.

But here it may be ask'd, Why our Lord ascended in such a solitary Place, having only the Apostles to be Eye-witnesses of his Ascension, and not rather in the City of *Jerusalem*, in the sight of the Elders and all the People of the *Jews*; who by that means would have had reason to have acknowledg'd him for their Heavenly King. *Ans^r*. The Lord Jesus acted quite after another manner than the Kings of this World are used to do. They commonly publish and proclaim whatever may tend to the Advancement of their Glory and Majesty; and whatever is derogatory thereto

Why not perform'd in the sight of the Jews.

¹ Mar. 16. 19. Luk. 24. 51. Acts 1. 9. ² 2 Cor. 12. 2, 3, 4. II. 66. 1. ³ John 14. 2, 3. 1 Pet. 3. 22. Col. 3. 1.

they industriously conceal. But our Saviour did the quite contrary ; he suffer'd and was crucify'd publickly, in the sight of a vast Concourse of People, who came to *Jerusalem* from all parts at the Feast of the Passover : But when he was transfigur'd, it was only in the presence of three of his Disciples, whom he forbade to tell the rest what they had seen¹ ; when he rose from the Dead, he shew'd himself not to all the People, but to Witnesses chosen by him² ; and when he pour'd out the Gift of the Holy Ghost, it was only on the Apostles met by themselves, whilst all *Jerusalem* knew not what to make of that Miracle³. Nor is the reason of this Divine Proceeding any Mystery. For, (1.) this was design'd to give place for the Exercise of Faith, by which God was willing to bring the World to Salvation. Now Sight is inconsistent with Faith, because Faith is an Act of Obedience depending purely on the Command of God. (2.) Supposing the *Jews* upon seeing Jesus ascending into Heaven, had acknowledg'd him for their Celestial King, yet such an Acknowledgment would not have been such as would have pleas'd God ; for they would have own'd him, only because they saw him to be their King, whereas our Lord tells *Thomas*, *Blessed are they who have not seen, and yet have believed*⁴. (3.) And lastly, 'tis not at all certain that the *Jews* upon such a Sight would have own'd him for their King. For they who ascrib'd his Miracles to the Power of the Devil, and who suborn'd the Soldiers to say upon his Resurrection, that his Disciples came by night and stole him away, would very probably have call'd this Ascension a Phantasm, an Apparition, and a delusive Dream. So true is that which our Saviour said, *If they hear not Moses and the Prophets, neither will they be persuaded tho one rose from the Dead*⁵.

the Truth It may be farther demanded, since the Apostles
it far- did not see our Saviour enter into Heaven it self, but a
er con- Cloud receiv'd him out of their sight, how were they,
m'd. and how are we certain that he did really ascend thi-

¹ Mat. 17. ² Acts 10. 41. ³ Acts 2. 3, &c. ⁴ John 20. 29. ⁵ Luke 16. 31.

ther? *Ans.* (1.) By the Testimony of two Angels, who declared that he was received into Heaven¹. (2.) By the Effusion of the Holy Ghost upon the Apostles, according to Christ's Promise²: From whence they could plainly infer he had obtain'd the Kingdom in Heaven. (3.) He was seen in Heaven by St. Stephen³, and by Paul travelling to *Damascus*⁴. (4.) Because the Apostles declare that all the Miracles they wrought, were through the Name of Christ rais'd from the Dead, and reigning in Heaven: From whence God is said to bear them witness, that is, to the Truth of their preaching, by Signs following⁵.

The *Lutherans*, by the Ascension of Christ into Heaven, look upon it to denote not so much a Change of Place, as of State and Condition. For they maintain that the Body of Christ, by virtue of the *Hypostatick Union*, was from the very first present in every Place, and that his Soul had a compleat Knowledge of all things: But that during his Humiliation, all those extraordinary Qualities both of Body and Mind were eclipsed, because Christ had then taken upon him the Form of a Servant, just as a King's Son cloth'd in the Habit of a Commoner. But that when he rose from the Dead and was glorified, these extraordinary Gifts shinn'd forth again, so that then the Body of Christ was, as before, present every where; and that this Change of State is denoted by his Ascension into Heaven.

The Lutherans Opinion about it examin'd and refuted.

For an Answer to this Notion, it may in the general be said, that it is contrary to all the foremention'd Places of Scripture, which assign to our Saviour a local Ascension from Earth into Heaven. But for a full Refutation of this Opinion, we shall more particularly examine what they have to say in defence of it, and then shall give a distinct Reply thereto.

In the first place they tell us, That Heaven is every where: Therefore Ascension into Heaven does not signify a local Motion, but only a Change of State.

Ans. Who will allow them that Heaven is every where? since 'tis very absurd. For if Heaven were

¹ Acts 1. 10, 11. ² Acts 2. 1, &c. ³ Acts 7. 55, 56.

⁴ Acts 9. 4, 5, 17. ⁵ 1 Cor. 15. 8. ⁶ Heb. 2. 4.

every where, it would be in Hell also; and then Christ descending thither, descended likewise into Heaven; and so consequently by the Descent of Christ into Hell his ascending into Heaven is establish'd.

Secondly they urge that Christ *Mat. 28. 20.* promis'd, *Lo, I am with you always unto the End of the World;* and again *Mat. 18. 20.* *Where two or three are gather'd together in my Name, there I am in the midst of them.* *Answ.* These Texts do not treat of the Corporeal Presence of Christ, which is visible; but of his Spiritual Presence, whereby he not only instructs and fits the Apostles for the Execution of their Office, but also incites, protects, defends and secures them from all Oppositions, and by which he is present to all who are sincerely gather'd together in his Name.

Thirdly, they alledg *Eph. 4. 10.* *He that descended, is the same also that ascended up far above all Heavens, that he might fill, or fulfil, all things.* *Answ.* This Text, and the connexion of it with those that go before and follow, inform us, that here is not meant any Corporeal Impletion, whereby our Saviour fills all things with his Body: But a Spiritual Impletion, whereby he fills the Church with the Gifts of the Holy Ghost. This will appear evident to all who consult the Context, and the Scope and Intention of the Apostle.

Fourthly they add, "If Christ be fix'd in any certain Place of Heaven, he will not be over all who call upon him, he cannot turn his Face to all, especially not to those who inhabit a different Part of the Earth; which is very absurd." *Answ.* (1.) We do not say that Jesus Christ is so fix'd to any certain Place of Heaven, that he cannot depart from it. (2.) Since the Earth is the Center, Christ who is in Heaven, is above all who dwell any where upon the Face of the Earth. (3.) He can always and every where hear our Prayers, tho he does not turn his Face directly towards us.

Fifthly and lastly, some are so extravagantly absurd as to assert, that this highest Heaven which we say is above the starry Firmament, is according to the Calculation of Astronomers at such an infinite Distance from us, that the Lord Jesus, tho he ascended ever so

swiftly,

swiftly, could not have got thither by this time, much less in so short a space as we assign: From whence they conclude that whatever is said of this Empyrean or highest Heaven, is a mere human Fiction. *Ans.* Who does not perceive but that such Fooleries as this tend to the Ridicule and Contempt of the Christian Religion and the Holy Scripture, and to give Atheists and Infidels an Occasion of cavilling at the History of the Creation? Certainly, granting the Authority of the Scriptures, this Objection vanishes of itself: For God in one Instant created the Heaven, and stretch'd it out into that vast space. But Reason it self shews the Vanity of it: For in the space of twenty four Hours, according to the common Opinion of Astronomers, the whole Frame of Heavenly Bodies is turn'd about; the Sun at one single Moment darts its Rays to the very Earth: And why then should it not be as easy for an Omnipotent God in one moment to carry up the Body of Christ from Earth to the highest Heaven?

The Efficient Cause of Christ's Ascension was God *The Eff.* the Father; for to him in Scripture is ascrib'd the ex-
alting of his Son Jesus, and placing him at his right *ent Cause of it.* Hand¹. And by some Texts² we are inform'd, not only that Christ was carry'd into Heaven by God the Father, but also that all Dominion and Power was deliver'd unto him; so that the Father plac'd him (as I may so speak) in the Throne of his Majesty, crown'd him with all Honour and Glory, and gave him Authority over all things.

The Ends of Christ's Ascension were various, some *The Ends* respecting Christ alone, others Christ for our sakes, *it three.* and others have a more immediate regard to us. The first of these was that the Father might introduce Christ (who had in all things approv'd himself obedient) into his Glory, and reward this his Ambassador, who had so faithfully discharg'd his Trust, with Honour and Majesty in his Heavenly Palace³.

The Ends which have a reference to Christ for our sakes, are, (1.) That he might be our Mediator, by

¹ Acts 2. 32, 33. Ch. 5. 30, 31. ² Eph. 1. 19, 20, 21, 22. Phil. 2. 9, 10. ³ Luk. 24. 26. Phil. 2. 8, 9. Heb. 12. 1, 2.

whose Intercession as Priest and King, we might have free Access to the Throne of Grace to find Help in the time of need. Our Nature and our Sins had put us at a distance from God, and could not but make us tremble at the Awfulness of his Majesty, before whom the very Angels cover their Faces with their Wings. But now since Christ is ascended, as often as we look towards Heaven, we may contemplate upon Jesus, Bone of our Bone, and Flesh of our Flesh, who was like to one of us, and was not ashamed to call us Brethren; and by his Mediation we may not only approach to, but find Favour with God. (2.) That he might send down from Heaven the Holy Ghost upon the Apostles, which he could not have done, unless he had ascended first; according to what we read *Joh. 7. 39.* and *Ch. 16. 7.*

The End of our Saviour's Ascension with respect to us, is the Confirmation of the Truth of our Ascension, and the Happiness of Heaven, if we continue his faithful Ministers and Disciples¹. Hence 'tis that *St. Paul* speaks of it, as of a thing certain and present, not only that God *has rais'd us up together*, but also *made us sit together in Heavenly Places in Christ Jesus*². From hence we conclude, that the Place of our Happiness is not this perishable Earth³, but the highest and incorruptible Heaven, whither Jesus is already entered. And that in order to obtain that blessed Seat, we must wean our Minds from the Love of this World and visible things, and raise them up to Heaven, to the Place whither our King is gone before; that so following him in the Body, we may at last be joined together with him.

3. His Session at the right Hand of the Father.

3. The Third degree of Christ's Exaltation is his Session at the right Hand of God the Father⁴, which Phrase is taken from *Psal. 110. 1.* where 'tis said of Christ, *Sit thou on my right Hand, until I make thine Enemies thy Footstool.* What the Meaning of this Phrase is, will be worth our while to enquire

¹ John 14. 2, 3. *Ch. 12. 26.* & *Ch. 17. 24.* ² Eph. 2. 5. 6. ³ John 2. 17. 2 Pet. 3. 10. ⁴ Eph. 1. 20. Col. 3. 1. Heb. 1. 3. & 8. 1.

more particularly. Some who are of a *Judaizing* rather than a Christian Spirit, from whence they are commonly call'd *Semi-judaizers*, denying the Empire which Christ now exercises over all things, and taking their Argument from the Propriety of the Word *Sitting*, do maintain, "That Christ at present is only
 "an idle Spectator, and that his Reign will not begin
 "till after God has destroy'd all his Enemies which
 "oppose his Kingdom, and Antichrist who sits in his
 "House: So that the meaning of this Phrase is, Be
 "thou at rest, relying upon my Right Hand and my
 "Power, for I will subdue all thine Enemies for thee." Now without running out into a large Refutation of this Opinion, which will be more proper when we treat of the Kingdom of Christ, we only say with respect to the Explication of this Phrase, that tho *Sitting* does imply Rest, yet *sitting at the Right Hand* is never taken in that Sense; but always denotes some Honour or Majesty which is imparted to the Person who is admitted to the Privilege of sitting at the Right Hand. This Phrase therefore is taken from the common Use of it among Men: and as the Right Hand with them is look'd upon to be the most Honourable Side, and whoever sits at the Right Hand of a King, is esteem'd not only next to him in Glory and Dignity, but also to be Partaker with him in the Regal Power and Authority; so Christ's being said to sit at the Right Hand of God the Father, is meant not only his being advanc'd to the highest Place next to the Father, but his sharing with him in the Supreme Authority and Dominion over all things; and *sit thou on my Right Hand*, &c. is as much as if he had said, Reign thou with me over the People. This is evident from *Verse 2.* where 'tis said, *Rule thou in the midst of thine Enemies*; and from the whole Psalm which informs us, that he was to fight against and subdue the Heathen. That this is the true Meaning of this Phrase, and that Dominion and Majesty was confer'd upon the Lord Jesus by his Session on the Right Hand of God, is likewise manifest from the Testimony of St. Paul and St. Peter. The former tells us', That God

has set Christ at his own Right Hand in the Heavenly Places, far above all Principality, and Power, and Might and Dominion: And the latter says¹, That Christ is gone into Heaven, and is on the Right Hand of God; Angels, and Authorities, and Powers being made subject to him. From hence it is that St. Stephen² just before his Death, looking up stedfastly into Heaven, saw the Glory of God, and Jesus standing on the Right Hand of God, as prepared and armed with Power to assist him. But of these Things more largely hereafter, when we come to treat of the Kingly Office of Christ.

C H A P. IV.

Of the several Offices of Christ as Mediator; and herein, First, of his Prophetical Office.

*Three-
d Office
Christ.*

THE fourth and last General Head we proposed to treat of, is the Work of Redemption it self, which being performed by the Lord Jesus in the Execution of his Mediatorial Office, it will be requisite to consider wherein this Office consists. Now with respect to the manifold Misery wherein Mankind was involved, the Mediatorial Office is divided into three Branches, the Prophetical, the Priestly, and the Kingly. The Misery under which Mankind groaned was, as we shewed before, the Dominion of Sin, and Eternal Death. Christ by his Prophetical Office destroyed the Power of Sin; and by his Priestly, Eternal Death, since thereby he took away the Guilt of Sin, and absolved us from the Punishment thereof. He took away both by his Kingly Office; for he prescribed to us Rules of Holiness, and furnishes us with the Strength and Gifts of the Holy Ghost, whereby we may resist all the Allurements of Sin and the Temptations of the Devil; and by his own omnipotent Power

¹ 1 Pet. 3. 22. ² Acts 7. 55.

actually frees us from the Bands of Sin, and translates us into a State of Happiness.

But for the fuller Explication of this Mediatorial Office, we shall treat in so many distinct Chapters of the several Branches of it, beginning with his Prophetical Office, wherein two things offer themselves to our Consideration; First, his Installation into this Office; and secondly, the Execution of it. Of the former we shall discourse in the first, of the latter in two other Sections of this Chapter.

S E C T. I.

Of the Installation of Christ into his Prophetical Office.

As to the Installation of Christ into the Prophetical Office, two things are considerable; First, the Preparation of the Person of Christ for it; and Secondly, his Mission.

With respect to the Preparation of our Saviour for it, we are only to enquire, how he was inform'd of the Will of God, and furnish'd with Abilities for the due Execution of this Office. Now 'tis well known, that he was not only conceived of the Holy Ghost, and thereby sanctified and set apart from other Men; but also that this Divine Spirit constantly resided in him, and instructed him in all Wisdom and Knowledge. The Scripturæ informs us, that he was full of the Knowledge of the Divine Will: to which he arriv'd not by Visions and Dreams, as the other Prophets; nor by the Intervention of an Angel discoursing with him, as with *Moses*; but by the immediate Revelation of God the Father¹. But the greatest and most plentiful Effusion of the Divine Spirit upon him was at his Baptism, when the Holy Ghost descended upon him like a Dove². Hence tis said, that *God giveth not the Spirit by measure unto him*³, and that of his *Fulness we have all received*⁴. Christ was likewise pre-

¹ John 1. 18. ² Mat. 11. 27. ³ Mat. 3. 16. ⁴ John 3. 34. ⁵ John 1. 16.

pared for this Office by his being tempted of the Devil, immediately after his Baptism; that thereby he might learn experimentally the great Power and Efficacy of that Spirit with which he was endowed, for the resisting the Temptations of the Devil; and so upon such a Trial might enter upon and execute his Office with the greater Alacrity.

Query
Answer'd.

But here it may be ask'd, Whether Jesus Christ was not received up into Heaven to the Father, with whom he familiarly conversed, and by whom he was there fully instructed in his Will, before he was sent into the World to preach the Gospel? *Ans.* Tho this Opinion consider'd in it self be pious, and tends to the advancing of our Saviour's Glory, yet it is not at all probable, because the Evangelists make no mention of it in the History of the Life of Jesus Christ. Now 'tis not to be supposed, that they who accurately related things of less moment concerning Jesus Christ, should pass by such a weighty Point in silence, as tended to the Honour of their Master, and to the Confirmation of the Divinity of his Doctrine. As to the Places of Scripture, which make mention of Jesus Christ's *ascending up to Heaven, from whence he descended, not to do his own Will, but the Will of him who sent him*¹; of his *ascending up where he was before*²; of his *coming forth from, and going back again to the Father*³: these Places, I say, make nothing in favour of their Opinion, who maintain that Christ after his Birth, and before his entring upon the Prophetical Office, was taken up into Heaven, where he was fully instructed in the Knowledge of the Divine Will. True it is, he came down from Heaven, and was with God, being the Eternal Son of God; and therefore when he says, *What and if ye shall see the Son of Man ascend up where he was before?* his meaning is not that he had ascended already since his Incarnation, but that before it, he was from all Eternity with the Father, and should ascend up to him again; which he did in a visible manner after his Resurrection, that being the only Ascension of Christ which we read of.

¹ John 3. 13. 6. 38. ² John 6. 61, 62. ³ John 16. 28.

As to the Mission of Christ to the Prophetical Office, the Truth of this appears from several Arguments. (1.) There are several Texts of Scripture, wherein our Lord himself and the Apostle St. Paul, declare that he was sent by the Father¹. (2.) The Inauguration of Christ at his Baptism is another Proof of his Divine Mission: For by this solemn Ceremony he was inaugurated in his Office, as the Kings and Priests, and sometimes the Prophets were in theirs by Oil. But this Inauguration was chiefly perform'd after his Baptism, when the Spirit, the true Unction typified by Oil under the Old Testament, descended upon him; and when God by a Voice from Heaven declared, *This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased*²; to which Declaration at his Transfiguration is added, *Hear him*³. (3.) The same is evinc'd by the Testimony of St. John the Baptist, which ought to have had some weight with the Jews who look'd upon John as a Prophet; and to this Testimony our Saviour appeals⁴, *Ye sent unto John, and he bare witness to the Truth*. (4.) And lastly, the Power of working Miracles is an undeniable Proof of his Divine Mission. See to this purpose John 5. 36. Chap. 10. 37, 38. Chap. 3. 2. But of the Miracles of Christ we shall discourse more at large, in treating of the Confirmation of his Doctrine.

S E C T. II.

Of the Execution of the Prophetical Office; or the Promulgation of the Doctrine of the Gospel, &c.

The Execution of Christ's Prophetical Office consists chiefly in the Promulgation of his Doctrine, tho' there are other things relating thereto necessary to be explain'd. In discoursing therefore on this Argument, we shall in this and the next Section distinctly consider, First, the Annunciation or Promulgation of the

Christ's
Executi
of his P
phetical
Office,

¹ John 12. 49. & 17. 3. & 20. 21. Rom. 8. 3. Gal. 4. 4.
² Mat. 3. 17. ³ Mat. 17. 5. ⁴ John 5. 33.

Doctrine of the Gospel, with what relates thereto; and Secondly the Confirmation of this Doctrine.

consists in
Pro-
ulgation
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As to the former of these, we shall treat first of the Doctrine it self, and then of the Manner how it was propos'd to the World. The Doctrine of the Gospel may be consider'd either as it was preach'd by Christ himself in his Life-time, or as it was promulg'd by the Apostles after his Ascension. Now tho the latter may more properly be refer'd to the Kingly, and the former to the Prophetical Office of Christ; yet to avoid Tautology we shall here consider the whole Doctrine of the Gospel together, as it was publish'd both by our Saviour among the *Jews*, and by the Apostles among all Nations.

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pel is.

The Doctrine then of the Gospel is the Revelation of the last and most perfect Will of God, concerning the Everlasting Salvation of Men, and the means of attaining it. From hence it is evident that it, as well as all other Covenants into which God has entred with Men, consists of two Parts, *viz.* Precepts, an Obedience to which God requires; and Promises.

contains
Precepts
properly so
call'd.

But before we explain the Nature of the Precepts, 'tis requisite to premise some things by way of Reply to two Questions that may be started on this Subject. And first, 'tis ask'd, whether Christ under the New Testament has prescribed any Precepts properly so call'd, an Obedience to which he requires under the Condition of promis'd Salvation? Some (*viz.* the *Contra-Remonstrants*) deny this, looking upon Jesus in his Mediatorial Office chiefly as a Priest, who has given the Father full Satisfaction for all the Sins of the Elect, and has fulfil'd the Law in their stead: As to the Precepts which we meet with in the Gospel, they tell us that they are only repeated out of the Law, that our Lord does not require the Obedience of the Elect to them consider'd as a Law, or a Condition to be perform'd by them, but works it in them by the Power of his Spirit: So that when he commands any thing, he really promises what he himself will work in his Elect. Now for a general Answer it may be said, That this Opinion entirely overthrows all necessity of Obedience, and puts a stop to all endeavours after Holiness. For if Christ does not properly require Obedience

Obedience of Men as the Condition of attaining Everlasting Salvation, but will work it in them, what necessity is there of performing what God requires not? What need we be concerned to do that which God has promised to work in Man? But for a more particular Reply, 'tis evident that the Gospel does contain in it Precepts: for (1.) Our Lord himself, *Mat. 5.* in proposing his Precepts, ushers them in with this Expression, *But I say unto you*; which is a plain Argument that Precepts properly so called were prescribed by him, as farther appears from several Texts of Scripture¹. (2.) Because our Saviour is a King: now 'tis the part of a King to prescribe Laws to his Subjects; and hence he as a King ready to ascend into Heaven commanded his Apostles not only to disciple and *baptize all Nations*, but likewise to *teach them to observe whatsoever he had commanded them*². Those Men therefore put asunder what the Gospel has joined together: The Gospel has indeed its Promises, but they are not Absolute, but Conditional, and to which the Condition of Obedience is most strictly annex'd. To this purpose the following Places of Scripture may be consulted, viz. *Joh. 3. 36. Rom. 8. 13: Gal. 6. 7, 8. Heb. 12. 14. and 1 Joh. 3. 7, 8.*

But to all this they object, That by this means Je- *An Object*
sus would be made a Legislator, and the Gospel be *tion an-*
chang'd into the Law. *Ans.* The Gospel is expressly *swer'd.*
call'd *the Law of Faith*³, and *the Law of Christ*⁴, and
*the perfect Law of Liberty*⁵. Nor need they be offend-
ed that herein we imitate the Style and Manner of
speaking us'd in Scripture, since some among them ex-
pressly call Christ a Legislator⁶.

Again, they urge that, *John 1. 17.* it is said, *The Joh. 1.*
Law was given by Moses, but Grace and Truth came explain

¹ John 13. 34. *Chap. 15. 10, 12, 14.* ² Mat. 28. 20.
³ Rom. 3. 27. ⁴ Gal. 6. 2. ⁵ Jam. 1. 25.

⁶ Thus the French Formulary calls him our Legislator and King; and Aretius Problem. Theol. Loc. II. de Jejunio Quadragesimæ has these Words, Ne in hoc Judæi pertinaces præferrent Legem suam, placuit Deo Patri novum illum Legislatorem Christum non minus quam Mosen jejunare.

by *Jesus Christ*. Answ. In every Law two things are to be consider'd, the Precepts themselves, and the Manner whereby they are requir'd. Precepts are suitable to every Law, but the Manner of exacting them may vary. For either the Observation of the Precepts is rigidly requir'd, without any conniving at or remitting of the Offence; and upon this account it is that the *Law* is strictly and properly so call'd: or else the Observance of them is requir'd according to Equity, as a Father deals with his Son; and this is the Case of the Gospel-Dispensation, which requires Repentance, and promises Remission of Sins to the Penitent, and the Assistance of the Holy Spirit for the performance of what is requir'd of them. Upon this account it is that the Gospel in opposition to the *LAW* is stil'd *GRACE*, not as it quits us of our Obligation to worship God, or destroys the Precepts of the *LAW* so far as they bind us, but as it takes away the Rigour of the *LAW*.

But (say they farther) 'tis said *Jerem. 31. 31, &c.* That God would make a new Covenant with the Faithful, not like the old one contain'd in the Law of *Moses*, but the Sum of which should be, *I will put my Law in their inward Parts, and write it in their Hearts, &c.* Answ. God does not in this place promise that he will immediately work in the Hearts of the Elect an Obedience to his Precepts; but that he will pour upon his People so many Favours, as that the Sense of them should inscribe the Love, and Study, and Practice of the Divine Law in their Hearts; which is plain from what follows, Ver. 34. *I will forgive their Iniquity, and I will remember their Sin no more.*

Another Question which may be ask'd is, Whether our Saviour fulfil'd the Law of *Moses* by the Addition of any new Precepts, or only rescu'd it from the false Glosses of the *Pharisees*? *Socinus* and his Followers maintain the former, and tell us that Christ added to the Law of *Moses* several new Precepts, such as these, of a Man's not putting away his Wife but for the Cause of Adultery, of Swearing, of loving our Enemies, of not loving the World, of Humility, of abstaining from things lawful, of mortifying the Flesh, of giving no Scandal or Occasion to Offence to others,

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others, of suffering for Righteousness sake, and the like. On the contrary, the *Calvinists* maintain that Christ only explain'd the Law, and rescued it from the Corruptions and false Glosses of the *Pharisees*; and therefore tell us that the Decalogue is the Summary of all the Precepts of the Christian Religion, to which they are all refer'd. Now 'tis an easy matter to reconcile this Difference, if we would but distinguish between the Literal and the Mystical Meaning of the Law. If we consider the LAW according to the Letter, no question is to be made but that the GOSPEL excels it both in the Perfection of its Precepts, and Greatness of its Promises. For the Precepts of the LAW are for the most part Ceremonial, whereas the GOSPEL prescribes but a few Ceremonies, its Intention being chiefly the purging of our Consciences. As to the Moral Precepts, 'tis certain that the LAW, through the Hardness of the *Jews* Hearts, allow'd of several Deficiencies, which the GOSPEL remov'd; and there are no Precepts in the LAW which in express Terms are any Rule to our Conduct.

To this it is objected, that in the Law it is said¹, *Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine Heart, and with all thy Soul, and with all thy Might, and thy Neighbour as thy self*: Now a greater Love than this is not requir'd under the Gospel. *ObjECTION.*
answer'd
Ans. No inference can be drawn from a general Precept, which is a Summary of more particular ones, whereby to conclude that the same Precepts were of force under the Law, as are now under the Gospel: But only that the Manner of requiring Obedience to the Precepts were the same under both Dispensations.

Again they object, that the perfect Law of Charity, concerning the Loving of our Enemies, is to be met with *Exod.* 23. 4, 5. where 'tis said, *If thou meet thine Enemy's Ox or his Ass going astray, thou shalt surely bring it back to him again, &c.* *Ans.* (1.) In this Place is only meant an Enemy of their own People, as for others they were not only allow'd to hate them, but were commanded expressly to destroy them²;

¹ Deut. 6. 5. ² Deut. 25. 19. & 7. 1. *Exod.* 17. 14. & 34. 12.

therefore a Love to all without exception was not commanded. (2.) They were not indeed allow'd to cherish Hatred in their Heart against their Brother; but were never commanded to repay Curfings and Revilings with Prayers and Blessings. (3.) It is evident from several Places¹, that the revenging of an Affront offer'd was lawful, and particularly it was allow'd to any Man that apprehended a Murderer to kill him upon the spot without any formal Process.

Thirdly they object, that the Precepts proper for the Conduct of Human Life are contain'd in the Tenth Commandment. *Answ.* This Law does not speak of an Adulterous Concupiscence, concerning which our Lord declares², that it is Adultery when committed already in the Heart; but only of such a Coveting, whereby any Man desires to have another's Wife for his own.

Fourthly, 'tis urg'd that St. Paul says³, *he taught but Moses and the Prophets.* *Answ.* St. Paul tell us, that he taught nothing but what *Moses* and the Prophets foretold should come to pass. For he taught that Jesus was the Christ, that he rose from the Dead, and now reigns in Heaven according to the Predictions of the Prophets. But from hence it by no means follows, that whatever Jesus Christ taught and commanded, was taught and commanded formerly by *Moses* and the Prophets.

Lastly they say, If the Evangelical Precepts be so perfect, then our Yoke is not so light as our Saviour tells us it is, but very grievous; nay heavier than that of the LAW, since the Gospel has added many new Precepts to it. *Answ.* (1.) The Law was an intolerable Yoke upon the account of its Ceremonies, from which the Gospel has freed us. (2.) It was a Yoke upon the account of its rigid Obligation to a sinless Obedience, without proposing any Remission of a Capital Offence; whereas the Gospel requires Repentance, and promises Forgiveness of Sins. (3.) It was a Yoke with respect to that little Assistance which it afforded for the bearing of it.

¹ Exod. 21. 23, 24, 25. Levit. 24. 19, 20. Deut. 19. 21.

² Mat. 5. 27, 28. ³ Acts 25. 22.

Having premis'd thus much in general, we shall now proceed to a more particular Explication of the Precepts of the G O S P E L; which either relate to Points of Doctrine, or to our Lives and Manners. The former is F A I T H in Christ Jesus, whereby 'tis requir'd as a necessary Condition of Salvation, that we should believe him to be the true *Messiah* promis'd before by God to be sent into the World. As to the Precepts relating to our Lives and Manners, they are comprehended under the general Word R E P E N T A N C E, which is the Summary of all our Saviour's Commands, and has regard both to the Deportment of our outward, as well as to the Temper of our inward Man. Nor was the Doctrine of our Saviour suited only to the *Jews*, but design'd for the Benefit of all Mankind; and accordingly after his Resurrection he order'd his Apostles to go out and preach it to all Nations, whom they were to receive into Communion upon the Conditions of Faith and Repentance, without any notice taken of the Legal Ceremonies.

The Promises of the Gospel exhibited by Jesus Christ are chiefly these: (1.) Remission of all Sins without exception. (2.) The Gift of the Holy Ghost, promis'd not only to the Apostles, but also to all the Faithful in general. (3.) The Resurrection of the Dead and Eternal Life, not express'd in dark and obscure, but in clear and plain Terms.

To this Part of Christ's Prophetical Office, two other things belong: (1.) His foretelling of future Events, wherein he excell'd the rest of the Prophets. (2.) His Praying for the People, and the Success of his Preaching.

For the full apprehending the Manner wherein our Saviour perform'd this Part of his Office, we are to consider, (1.) His great Zeal, whereby he prefer'd the promoting of God's Glory and the Salvation of Men to all other things. (2.) His Freedom and Boldness of Speech, in that he taught without any respect of Persons. (3.) His Authority in teaching, for he taught not as the *Scribes* and *Pharisees*, but as one having Authority; and not as the Prophets who us'd to express themselves with, *Thus saith the Lord*, whereas his way of speaking was, *I say unto you*. (4.) His Wisdom

The Precepts of the Gospel, Faith and Repentance.

The Promises of the Gospel.

The Manner of performing his Doctrine.

dom whereby he reveal'd such things as were unknown to former Ages, even to the Chief of the antient Prophets. (5.) The Eloquence and Clearness of his Doctrine, since he was admir'd for *the gracious Words which proceeded out of his Mouth*¹; and his very Enemies acknowledg'd *that never any Man spake as he spake*². True it is, sometimes he express'd himself in Parables and dark Sayings, but he took care from time to time to explain them to his Disciples; and his speaking in Parables was a means to excite their Attention, and afterwards their Curiosity of enquiring and knowing the Meaning of the Parable.

S E C T. III.

Of the Confirmation, Design and Event of the Doctrine of Christ.

the Confir-
mation of
Christ's
Doctrine,
By Mi-
racles.

Another thing considerable in the Prophetical Office of Christ, is the Confirmation of his Doctrine, which consists of several Particulars. The first and chiefest of them is by Miracles, which are an unquestionable Sign of the Divine Mission. This *Nicodemus* own'd³, and to this our Saviour himself appeal'd as an undoubted Testimony of his being sent forth from God⁴. Nay, many who saw his Miracles were moved to believe in him⁵, and these are said to be sufficient to excite our Belief⁶; and the *Jews* are blamed for not believing in Jesus, who had wrought so many Miracles among them⁷.

an Objection
of the
Jews an-
swered.

However, the *Jews* object that Miracles are not a sufficient Evidence of the Divine Mission of Jesus Christ, since it may so happen that a Miracle may be wrought by some false Prophet, to whom God would have no Credit to be given⁸: Nor can Christians be fully convinc'd of the Divine Mission of Jesus Christ,

¹ Luke 4. 22. ² John 7. 46. ³ John 3. 2. ⁴ John 5. 36. & 10. 37, 38. Mat. 11. 4, 5. ⁵ John 1. 49, 50. Ch. 2. 11, 23. & Ch. 4. 39. ⁶ John 20. 31. ⁷ John 12. 37. & 15. 24. ⁸ Deut. 13. 1, 2, 3.

since himself has foretold *that false Prophets should arise, who would work Signs and Wonders*¹. Answ. For a full Reply to this Objection it may be said in the general, that God might permit some false Prophets among the *Jews* to work Miracles, in order to try the Constancy of that People; but they were such Prophets as design'd to draw them off from the Worship of the true God: which can never be said of Jesus Christ, who neither by his Doctrine nor Miracles excited the People to such an Apostacy, but rather to a more strict Obedience to the whole Will of the true God. As to those false Prophets of whom our Saviour forewarns us, 'tis certain that they did not work true Miracles, but only false and lying Wonders, after the Working of Satan². But to set this matter beyond all Dispute, and to evince that the Miracles of our Saviour were true Miracles, and consequently an Evidence of his Divine Mission, we need only enquire into the Nature of them, and therein we shall meet with all those Qualifications which are necessary to render them true and genuin. What we have to offer on this Argument, is reducible to these three general Heads. (1.) It is requisite that the Work reputed to be a Miracle, appear to have been truly done, and that the Effects thereof should be manifest to our Senses, as giving Sight to the Blind, Hearing to the Deaf, and Life to the Dead: All which were so many Signs of the Reality of Christ's Miracles, none of them being done in secret, but openly in the View of all the People, the Effects whereof were notoriously visible. (2.) Another Qualification of a Miracle is, that it should exceed all the Powers of Nature, either by being wrought without its Assistance, such as raising a Dead Man to Life, giving Sight to one that was born blind, &c. or by being wrought after a supernatural manner: And this Qualification was evident in several Miracles wrought by Christ. (3.) It is requisite that the Miracle wrought should not tend to the Subversion of any Doctrine, approv'd of by God formerly by sufficient Miracles: For God cannot contradict him-

¹ Mat. 24. 24. ² 2 Thess. 2. 9.

self, nor destroy any Doctrine which he had before confirm'd.

For a farther Proof of the Reality of our Saviour's Miracles, let it be consider'd, (1.) That they were infinite in Number, according to that of St. John¹, *There are also many other things which Jesus did, the which if they should be written every one, I suppose that even the World it self could not contain the Books that should be written.* (2.) That they were Universal, such as extended to all Creatures, to Devils², to the Sea³, to Winds⁴, to Fishes⁵, to Loaves⁶, to Swine⁷, to a Figtree⁸, to Water by changing it into Wine⁹, and lastly to all sorts of Distempers¹⁰, even to Death it self¹¹. (3.) That they were all so many Mercies, two excepted, viz. the destroying of the Herd of Swine¹², and cursing the Figtree. (4.) That their Effects were not transient, but permanent. (5.) That all those Miracles were wrought by one word's speaking. And (6.) That he gave to others an Authority of working Miracles in his Name¹³.

To these Miracles of Christ may very justly be added such as God the Father wrought in favour of his Son, in order to establish his Authority among Men, and to testify that he was his true Son. Such for instance were, the opening of the Heavens at his Baptism, the visible Descent of the Holy Ghost upon him, and the Voice which followed¹⁴; his Transfiguration upon the Mount¹⁵, which St. Peter mentions as an extraordinary Sign of his being the true Messiah¹⁶; and another Voice that came down from Heaven in the Hearing of the Jews¹⁷. Add to this the Events which happen'd at his Death and Resurrection, for then the Sun was darkned, the Veil of the Temple was rent in the midst, the Graves were open'd, and the Bodies

¹ John 21. 25. ² Mat. 8. 28. & 12. 22. & 17. 15.
³ Mat. 14. 26. ⁴ Mat. 8. 24. ⁵ John 21. 6. ⁶ Mat. 14.
 13. & 15. 30. ⁷ Mat. 8. 28. ⁸ Mat. 21. 19. ⁹ John 2.
 1, 2. ¹⁰ Mat. 8. 16. ¹¹ Mat. 9. 24, 25. Luke 7. 14, 15.
 John 11. 43, 44. ¹² Mat. 8. 31, 32. ¹³ Mat. 10. 8. Luke
 10. 17. ¹⁴ Mat. 3. 16. ¹⁵ Mat. 17. 2. ¹⁶ 2 Pet. 1. 17, 18.
¹⁷ John 12. 28.

of the Saints arose out of their Graves¹. And lastly, the raising of Christ from the Dead, and taking him up into Heaven, was an uncontestable Evidence of the Divinity of his Doctrine.

But here it may be said, Why were there no Miracles and Signs wrought in the Heavens, as in the Times of *Joshua* and others, and as the *Pharisees* requir'd²? for by this means all pretence of Incredulity would have been taken away from the *Jews*. Answ. (1.) God works Miracles not according to the Humour and vain Curiosity of Men, but only such as in his infinite Wisdom he thinks proper to create Belief. (2.) It does not follow that they would have wanted a pretence of Infidelity, since God by raising Christ from the Dead gave them such a Sign as exceeded all others. (3.) God did shew Signs in Heaven in favour of our Saviour, by opening the Heavens, by sending down the Holy Ghost, &c. as we have but just now observ'd. Therefore we may very reasonably conclude, that the *Jews* who rejected Christ, had no manner of Pretence for their Obstinacy. *Nazaran* the Syrian, and the Woman of *Sarepta* believ'd upon one single Miracle³, why then should the *Jews* remain incredulous after so many wonderful Miracles wrought by Christ? They themselves say, *We know that God spake unto Moses*⁴: But how did they know this, unless by his Miracles? Now if they believe the Miracles of *Moses*, what Pretence can they make for not believing those of Jesus Christ, which so far excel the others both in Number and Greatness?

A second Evidence or Confirmation of the Doctrine of Christ was, by the Testimonies of the Holy Scripture. Hence it is that he says⁵, *Search the Scriptures; for in them ye think ye have Eternal Life; and they are they which testify of me*. Nay he confirm'd his Doctrine by Testimonies taken out of the Old Testament⁶, and with so much Evidence and Skill, that the *Jews* marvel'd how he knew Letters, having never learn'd⁷.

An Ob.

the an-

swer'd.

2. By the Testimonies of Holy Writ.

¹ Mat. 27. 51, 52, 53. ² Mat. 16. 1. ³ 2 Kings 5. 13.
⁴ 1 Kings 17. 24. ⁵ John 9. 29. ⁶ John 5. 39. ⁷ Luke 4.
 21, &c. & 24. 27, 46, 47. ⁸ John 7. 15.

He likewise avoided the Snares laid by the *Scribes* and *Pharisees* against him, by giving such a Mystical Interpretation of the Scriptures alledg'd by them, as they had not any thing to reply ¹.

3. By its
Sanctity.

Another Confirmation of the Doctrine of Christ was the Holiness thereof. This our Saviour alledges as a Proof, when he says ², *My Doctrine is not mine, but his that sent me: If any Man will do his Will, he shall know of the Doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of my self.* And again ³, *He that is of God heareth God's Words; ye therefore hear them not, because ye are not of God.* For 'tis impossible, but that that Doctrine should be Divine, which breathes forth nothing but Holiness.

4. By the
Holiness of
his Life.

A fourth Evidence of Christ's Doctrine is the Holiness of his Life, which was so great that he did no Sin ⁴, nay did not so much as know it ⁵, and hence is said to be *in all things like unto us, Sin only excepted*. And he makes this bold Challenge to his very Enemies, *Which of you convinceth me of Sin?* Now such an one as this can by no means be suspected of any Imposture.

5. By his
Bloody
Death.

The last Evidence of the Divinity of Christ's Doctrine was his Bloody and Ignominious Death. For it is the Duty of every true Prophet to lay down his Life, and to suffer all manner of Injuries from Men, for the sake of the Doctrine which God has commanded him to announce. Should he refuse this, his Doctrine might very justly be suspected, since by this Neglect he would be afraid of Men more than of God. The Death of Christ therefore was as a Seal and Confirmation of the Covenant; and his Blood, as the Blood of a federal Victim, whereby the New Testament was sign'd and establish'd.

Wherein
the Law
and the
Gospel do
agree.

From what has been said it is easy to perceive where in the LAW and the GOSPEL do agree or disagree with one another. They agree in two things: (1.) In the Author, which is the same of both, viz.

¹ Mat. 21, & 22. ² John 7. 16, 17. ³ John 8. 47.
⁴ 1 Pet. 2. 21. ⁵ 2 Cor. 5. 21. ⁶ Heb. 4. 15. ⁷ John 8.
46.

God the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ: Which is to be noted in opposition to the *Manichees*, who pretend that the Author of the Old and New Testament was not the same Person: Tho *Heb.* 1. 1, 2. the same God who at sundry times, and in divers manners spake in time past unto the Fathers by the Prophets, is said to have spoken in these last days unto us by his Son. (2.) In that both contain a sort of a mutual Compact betwixt God and Men, wherein God requires Obedience from Man, upon performance of which he promises to reward him.

They disagree in the following Particulars: (1.) In *Wherein* the Mediator of both; *Moses* being the Mediator of *they disagree* the LAW, who deliver'd it to the *Israelites* as he receiv'd it from Angels¹, whereas *Christ* is the Mediator of the GOSPEL, which he receiv'd immediately from God the Father²; and hence he is expressly stil'd *the Mediator of a new and better Covenant*³. (2.) In the manner of establishing both; the LAW being establish'd by the Blood of Beasts⁴, but the New Covenant by the Blood of its Mediator⁵, which therefore is stil'd *the Blood of the New Testament*⁶. (3.) In the Doctrine of both; the Gospel excelling the Law in the Nature, Spirituality and Perfection of its Precepts, and in the Greatness and Worth of its Promises, as we have already evinc'd. (4.) In the Efficacy or Energy of both; the Law indeed was made against Transgressions⁷, but *it was weak through the Flesh*⁸, and was only as a School-master to keep Men in Awe, and restrain them from the Commission of more enormous Crimes, whilst it could not render them truly Spiritual. On the contrary, the Gospel purges the Conscience from dead Works, that so Men may not live so much themselves, as Christ in them⁹; and it writes its Precepts in the very Hearts of Men¹⁰. (5.) In the Extent of both; the Law being given only to the People of *Israel*, as being accommodated to them and to

¹ Acts 7. 53. Gal. 3. 19. ² John 1. 18. & 3. 13. ³ Heb. 8. 6. & 12. 14. ⁴ Exod. 24. 8. Heb. 9. 20. ⁵ Heb. 9. 15, &c. ⁶ Mat. 26. 28. ⁷ Gal. 3. 19. ⁸ Rom. 8. 3. ⁹ Gal. 2. 20. ¹⁰ Heb. 8. 10, 11. See likewise Rom. 8. 3. Heb. 7. 19. & 9. 14.

none besides¹: whereas the Gospel was design'd for and preach'd to the whole World, its Doctrine being suitable to all alike, requiring only Faith, Repentance, and Amendment of Life. (6.) And lastly, in the Duration of both; the Old Covenant is abolish'd, consisting of Types and Figures, the Nature of which was such as to cease, when the Body which they shadow'd out was come²: But the New one is Eternal³, being perfect, containing the whole Will of God, and declaring to us the Method of obtaining Everlasting Salvation, and the full Remission of all our Sins.

The End of
Christ's
Propheti-
cal Office.

As to the End of Christ's Prophetical Office, it is to be consider'd either as Christ preach'd the Gospel himself in his own Person, or as it was preach'd by his Command by the Apostles after his Ascension into Heaven: And with respect to both, the End may be said to be either Natural or Accidental. The Natural End of it, as the Gospel was preach'd by Christ himself, was the Instruction of a few; for he says⁴, *That he was sent only to the lost Sheep of the House of Israel*: and the same Restraint he laid upon his Apostles, when he sent them out during his Life-time⁵. The Accidental End was the Peoples rejecting his Doctrine, which Event proceeded not from the Nature of the Gospel, but from the Wickedness and Obstinacy of the *Jews*. The same Event the Apostles met with in their preaching, for the *Jews* still rejected the Doctrine of a Crucify'd *Jesus*, and by that means excluded themselves from Salvation. But the Natural End of their Mission by Christ, was to preach the Gospel to all Nations, and convert the *Gentiles* to the Faith; for this End it was that our Saviour commission'd his Apostles to go out into all the World⁶.

Effects.

The Events or Effects of this Doctrine are, (1.) The one God of *Israel*, the Creator of Heaven and Earth, is acknowledg'd every where by all People to be the only true God, for there is no Nation that has embrac'd the Gospel, but worships the God of *Israel*;

¹ Deut. 4. 8. Psal. 147. 19. ² Heb. 8. 13. ³ Heb. 13. 20. ⁴ Mat. 15. 24. ⁵ Mat. 10. 5. ⁶ Mat. 28. 19. Mar. 16. 15,

whereas before, the Knowledge of that true God seems to have been confin'd within the narrow Bounds of the Land of *Israel*. (2.) Idolatry is wholly extinguish'd, and the Idols of the *Gentiles* are taken away. (3.) The Oracles of Dæmons are ceas'd, and silenc'd in all Countries where the Christian Faith has been embrac'd. (4.) The Enmity betwixt *Jew* and *Gentile* is taken away, and those two different sorts of People are now made one in Christ; that is, so far as they have own'd him for the true *Messiah*.

C H A P. V.

Of the Priestly Office of Christ.

IN this Part of the Mediatorial Office of Christ, ^{The Pri} there are three things chiefly considerable; First, ^{ly Office} the Appointment of it; Secondly, the Execution of ^{Christ.} it; and thirdly, the Effects of it. Of these Points, with some other things relating thereto, we shall treat distinctly in the following Sections.

S E C T. I.

Of Christ's being appointed to his Priestly Office.

That Christ ought to have been put into the Priestly ^{Its Ap-} Office by God, appears from what the Divine Writer ^{pointme} tells us in these Words', *No Man taketh this Honour to himself, but he that is called of God, as was Aaron: So also Christ glorified not himself, to be made an High Priest, but he that said unto him, Thou art my Son, to day have I begotten thee.* And that God did put *Jesus* into this Office, is very largely taught us in the Epistle to the *Hebrews*, which requires our highest Esteem, since therein the Priestly Office of Christ is

more fully and distinctly explain'd than in any other Book of the New Testament: And all the Types and Sacrifices under the Old are prov'd, by a very exact Application of them, to be fulfil'd in him.

Query
answered.

But it is ask'd, Whether God calling the Lord Jesus to the Priesthood, did it out of any natural Necessity for the Satisfaction of his vindictive Justice? This Question might have been spared: For what need is there to enquire what God could have done, since what he has done is apparent? But since some there are who insist upon it, we think fit to give our Opinion about it, and that as briefly as possible. From what we have elsewhere¹ said at large as to the Vindictive Justice of God, it appears that God lies under no necessity by his Nature to punish Sin: Nor can he therefore be said by any natural Necessity to require Satisfaction for those Sins, which he would pardon. Besides, the Holy Scriptures every where represent² the gratuitous Love of God, and his own Free-will, as the Fountain of Salvation; from whence proceeded not only the Sending of Christ into the World for our Redemption³, but also the very Remission of Sins, after the Sacrifice of Christ was offer'd⁴.

Objection
answer-

To this it may be objected, If God without any Breach of his Justice could have remitted Sins without Satisfaction, he would not have laid upon his Son such a severe Suffering, which would have been superfluous.

Ans. Every thing that is not absolutely necessary, is not upon that account superfluous. God was pleas'd in his infinite Wisdom to make choice of this Method of bringing Men to Salvation, as being the most proper to advance his Glory, and to convert Men from their Sins to a Holiness of Life. For what greater Demonstration could there be of God's being a just Judge, and of his Hatred towards Sin, than by this severe and bloody Sacrifice of his Son for Sinners? And what greater Motive can there be to a Holy Life, than to consider that we cannot expect the Pardon of our Sins,

¹ B. 2. Ch. 4. Sect. 6. ² John 3. 16. Rom. 5. 8. 2 Tim. 1. 9, 10. ³ 1 John 4. 9, 10. ⁴ Eph. 1. 7. & 4. 32. Col. 1. 14. & 3. 13.

for the Expiation of which Christ suffered so much, unless we shake hands with them, and entirely devote our selves to a Newness of Life and Conversation?

But for a fuller Apprehension of the manner where-
by God plac'd his Son in the Priestly Office, it will
not be amiss to consider the Difference there is betwixt
the *Aaronical* Priesthood and that of *Jesus Christ*. *The Difference be-
twixt the* Aaroni-
(1.) The *Aaronical* was made without, that of *Christ* cal and
with an Oath¹, which shew'd both the Excellency and *Christ's*
the Immutability of the latter. (2.) The Priesthood of *Priesthood*.
Christ was according to the Order of *Melchisedec*²,
the Kingly and Priestly Power being lodg'd in one and
the same Person, and having no Successor to this Office;
whereas the *Aaronical* pass'd from Father to Son,
and was confin'd to the Tribe of *Levi*, of which none
ever exercis'd the Kingly Power. (3.) In the *Aaroni-
cal* Priesthood the Sacrifice and the Priest were not the
same, but in that of Christ they are. (4.) They dif-
fer in their Efficacy, the *Aaronical* Sacrifices being on-
ly appointed for the expiating of lesser Offences,
whereas Jesus Christ offer'd up himself a Sacrifice for
all Sins both great and small, future as well as past.
(5.) The *Aaronical* Sacrifices were offer'd every year,
nay every day by reason of their Insufficiency; where-
as our Saviour offer'd himself but once, *whereby he hath
perfected for ever them that are sanctified*³. And this
Observation may serve as a Confutation of the *Roma-
nists* Opinion, who pretend that this Sacrifice is repeat-
ed every time their Mass is celebrated. (6.) And last-
ly, the *Levitical* Priesthood was executed on Earth,
whereas our Saviour's, tho begun here, yet is consum-
mated in Heaven. Upon all these accounts it appears
how much more excellent the Priesthood of Christ was
than that of *Aaron*.

¹ Heb. 7. 20, 21. ² Psal. 110. 4. ³ Heb. 9. 25, 26, 27,
28, & 10. 14.

S E C T. II.

*Of the Execution of Christ's Priestly Office; and
herein of his Oblation and Intercession.*

The Execu-
tion of
Christ's
Priestly Of-
fice consists
1. In Obla-
tion.

The Execution of this Office consists (according to the Opinion of most Divines) of two Parts, *viz.* Oblation and Intercession, to which some add Benediction, but this is included in the other two.

As to the first of these, it is that whereby *Jesus* offer'd up himself to his Father as an expiatory Sacrifice for Sins: Which Oblation was perform'd partly on Earth, and partly in Heaven. He began this Oblation upon Earth, when in Obedience to his Father's Command he freely and voluntarily deliver'd up himself to a bloody and accursed Death, and pour'd out his precious Blood for us, as the Price of our Redemption: Which Obedience of his even to the Death, the Father so highly esteem'd as to accept of this Blood from the Hand of his Son, as a plenary Propitiation for our Sins. But this Oblation was perfected and compleated in Heaven, into which he entred with his own Blood, and presented it to the Father as it were in the Holiest of Holies. This is what we are taught all along in the Epistle to the *Hebrews*, and especially Chap. 9. and that Divine Writer illustrates it by the Example and Similitude of the High Priest under the Old Testament. The one entred not into the Sanctuary without Blood, and the other entred into Heaven as our Priest, with his own Blood'. The High Priest carried the Blood of the Sacrifice into the Sanctuary, sprinkled it before the Lord, and by that Action procur'd the Expiation of Sins: And so the Blood of Christ, not properly but figuratively speaking, is presented to God, inasmuch as *Jesus*, who entred not into Heaven but by his own Blood, places himself before the Father for us, and in this figurative sense may be said to shew his Wounds and offer his Blood to the Father.

From what has been briefly said, it appears how mean an Opinion they have of the Death of Christ, who call it a Preparation to an Oblation, which was only to be perform'd in Heaven, and do not attribute to our Saviour any Sacerdotal Functions whilst he liv'd on Earth. For tho we freely own that the Priesthood of Christ is in several Places, particularly in the Epistle to the *Hebrews*, describ'd to us as administer'd in Heaven; yet this does not exclude those Functions which were perform'd, and in some measure consummated by him on Earth. For tho our Saviour whilst he liv'd is not in express Terms call'd a Priest, yet Sacerdotal Acts are ascrib'd to him; as for instance, that *he gave himself for us, an Offering and a Sacrifice for a sweet-smelling Savour*¹; That *he gave his Life a Ransom for many*²; That *he shed his Blood for many for the Remission of Sins*³; and 'tis frequently said that *he dy'd for us*. So that we may very well conclude that this Sacrifice of Christ was begun here on Earth when he offer'd up himself upon the Cross, but perfected and compleated in Heaven, when he appear'd before the Father, and presented to him the Sacrifice of himself.

To this very probably some one may object, that the killing the Sacrifice under the Old Testament was no part of the Oblation, but only an Act preparatory thereto. *Ans^r*. (1.) We readily confess, that the killing of the Sacrifice was no part of that Oblation, which was offer'd by the Priest in the Sanctuary, with which the Oblation of Christ made in Heaven is compar'd: However it was a Part of a Sacrifice consider'd fully and intirely, and had also its Perfection. (2.) The Case is not the same with the Death of Jesus Christ and the Victims under the Old Testament. These were by the Priests drag'd to the Altar; but Jesus Christ freely and voluntarily offer'd up himself to Death for the sake of Mankind: so that tho the killing of the Victim under the LAW, was no part of the Sacrifice, yet this can by no means be said of the Death of Christ, there being so wide a Difference betwixt the one and the other.

Christ's Death a true Sacrifice, and not a Preparation only.

An Objection answered.

¹ Eph. 5. 2. ² Mat. 20. 28. ³ Mat. 26. 28.

by the
remission
Sins is
cribed to
Death
Christ.

Again, some others may say, If the Death of Christ is as it were the Beginning, and presenting of it in Heaven the Consummation of the Oblation, why then is the Remission of Sins commonly ascrib'd to the Death of Christ? *Ans.* Because his Death, as is evident from what has been already said, was the most effectual for the Expiation of our Sins, and the Oblation made in Heaven deriv'd all its Efficacy from thence. And there are several things remarkable in the Death of Christ, which conduce to such an Efficacy. For (1.) we have the Promise and Will of God, who appointed the Death of Christ for the Redemption of Mankind¹; so that God would be satisfy'd with no other Price. (2.) The Dignity of the Person offer'd is likewise to be consider'd, being the Son of God²; and this adds much to the Virtue and Efficacy of his Death. (3.) His Innocence and Purity of Life³. (4.) His most ready Obedience to Death, even the Death of the Cross⁴. (5.) And lastly, the Greatness of his Sufferings both in Body and Mind.

By In-
cession.
at it is.

The second Act of Christ's Priestly Office is Intercession; what that is, and how far it differs from the former Act of Oblation, will be worth our while to consider. Some refer to it the Prayers which Jesus Christ offer'd for his Disciples and others whilst on Earth: but herein they are mistaken; for those Prayers rather belong to his Prophetical Office, because 'tis the Prophet's Duty, as we have already shewn, to pray for the People. That which properly belongs to it, is the Office which he now performs for us in Heaven, in his State of Exaltation, as he reigns at the Right-hand of God the Father. This Intercession of Christ is not an humble Supplication and Prayer, which he offers up to the Father for us in a prostrate and suppliant Posture; nor does it denote a mere Affection, whereby the Lord Jesus is inclinable to expiate our Sins, and bestow upon us Eternal Salvation: But 'tis the Presence and Appearance of Christ before

¹ 1. If. 53. 10, 11. ² John 3. 16. Rom 8. 32. ³ 1 John 4. 9, 10.

⁴ 1 Pet. 1. 18, 19. Ch. 2. 22. & Ch. 3. 18. ⁵ Phil. 2. 7, 8.

Heb. 10. 5, 6, 7.

the Father, and the constant Application of the Pardon of Sins in order to Salvation, which he has purchas'd by the Offering of his own Blood; and this Appearance by a figurative way of speaking is call'd Intercession, since it bears some Analogy thereto. For as an Advocate by his Intercession manages the Cause of his guilty Client, and thereby suspends the Punishment; and his whole Intercession tends to the obtaining of his Client's Pardon from the Judge: So our Saviour by his Intercession manages our Cause with the Father, and puts a stop to the Punishment due to our Sins. Nay, he does more for us than an Earthly Advocate for his Client; the one manages a dubious Cause, and is uncertain of the Event; whilst Christ who is sure of Success, is always our Intercessor, and procures an effectual Deliverance from Punishment, which is the constant effect of his Priestly Office.

But for the clearer apprehending of the Force of this Intercession, it is to be observ'd, that the Intercession of our Saviour is prevalent against a twofold Accusation; viz. (1.) That which the Devil brings against us, who is upon that account stil'd κατήγορος, the Accuser of our Brethren, *who accuseth them before God day and night*¹. (2.) That which our Sins bring against us, which are said to cry unto God for Vengeance²; and hence it is that the Blood of Christ is said to *speak better things than the Blood of Abel*³, since it puts a stop to the Cry of our Sins.

However we ought to beware, on the one hand, not to confound the Intercession of Christ with his Kingly Office, as if it were no more than an actual Communication of those things which are necessary to Faith and Repentance, in order to our attaining the Remission of Sins. For hereby this Sacerdotal Act of Christ would only relate to Men, whereas the Scripture⁴ informs us, that it is wholly employ'd with God the Father, in order to render him propitious to Men. Nor on the other hand ought we to look on this Function of Intercession as repugnant to the Regal Power

¹ Rev. 12. 10. ² Jam. 5. 4. ³ Heb. 12. 24. ⁴ Rom. 8. 34. Heb. 9. 24. 1 John 2. 1.

of Jesus Christ. For as the Sacerdotal and Kingly Offices cannot be consistent, if the King be conceiv'd as supreme, independent, and subordinate to none else; so they may be very consistent, if the Kingdom be consider'd as bestow'd by another, and subordinate to, and dependent upon that supreme Power which bestow'd it: and of such a nature is the Kingdom bestow'd by God the Father on our Lord Jesus Christ, as Mediator betwixt him and Man.

Benediction. Forasmuch as our Saviour by his Oblation and Intercession has receiv'd Power from the Father of bestowing Everlasting Benediction on us; hence it is that this is likewise reckon'd as part of his Priestly Office, and may be comprehended under the two foremention'd Acts, which in it will receive their Completion. The Apostle expressly takes notice of this when he says, *that Christ was once offer'd to bear the Sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time, without Sin, unto Salvation*¹. Herein he alludes to the Action of the High-Priest, who entering into the Sanctuary expiated the Sins of the People by the Blood of the Sacrifice, whilst they waited for him without. The Priest having done this, came forth and blessed the People, who were then purg'd from their Sins, and pray'd God to pour upon them all Happiness. In the like manner Christ also is enter'd once into Heaven to expiate our Sins by his Oblation and Intercession: He is no longer seen by the Faithful, but look'd for by them, till he comes forth again to bestow upon them his Divine Benediction. At the Day of the last Judgment he will come forth to his own without Sin, *i. e.* without the Guilt of Sins, which have already been expiated by him; and will shew the Effect of this Remission, not by wishing (as the Levitical High-Priest) but by bestowing upon his faithful People all manner of Celestial and Eternal Happiness.

¹ Heb. 9. 28.

S E C T. III.

The Opinion of Socinus concerning the Satisfaction of Jesus Christ examin'd and refuted.

From what was said in the foregoing Section it appears what was the Act of Christ's Priestly Office, viz. the obtaining the Remission of Sins, and our Redemption. But wherein this consists, Divines are not very well agreed.

Socinus and his Followers give us this account of it, *The Opinion of Socinus refuted.*
 "That Christ entring into Heaven by his own Blood, has received from the Father a Power over all things, by virtue of which he should convert Men from Sin to Righteousness; and thus he expiates their Sins, and reconciles them to God." But this is too loose an account of the Priestly Office of Christ; for what they attribute to him, he may do as he is a Prophet and a King. Where then is the Sacerdotal Act? What Oblation do they assign to Christ, whereby to denominate him a Priest? For every High Priest is ordain'd to offer Gifts and Sacrifices; wherefore (as the Apostle argues¹) it is of necessity that this Man (viz. the Man Christ Jesus) have somewhat also to offer, that thereby he might be truly a Priest. We ought not then to confound the Offices of Christ one with the other, but to consider them as distinct: As he is a King and a Prophet, he is the Vicegerent of God, and declares his Will and Pleasure to Men: But as he is a Priest, his Business is with God alone, in order to render him propitious and merciful to sinful Man.

For a fuller Refutation of the *Socinian* Doctrine, we will consider what Force and Energy the Scripture does all along attribute to the Death of Christ; whereby it will appear, that it was a real and proper Sacrifice, by which God's Anger was appeas'd, and he was pleas'd to pardon the Sins which were the occasion of his Anger. (1.) This is evident from all those Texts

¹ Heb. 8. 3.

wherein Christ is stiled *an Offering* and *Sacrifice for Men*, or *for the Sins of Men*¹. (2.) From those Places where he is call'd *ἱλασμενον* and *ἱλασμος*, *the Propitiation for our Sins*², and said *ἰλασμεναι*, *to make Reconciliation for the Sins of the People*³: All which Expressions plainly denote that our Saviour had reconciled the Father to us, and that the whole Force and Efficacy of this Propitiation was deriv'd from his Death. (3.) From all those Places wherein Christ is said *to die for our Sins*⁴. (4.) And lastly, in those from which we are said to have *ἀπαλῶτευσιν*, *Redemption by him*⁵, and those other Places where Christ is stiled *λύτρεν* and *ἀντίλυτρεν*, *a Ransom for many*⁶. By which Phrases it is evident, that the Blood of Christ was the Price of our Redemption, which he paid down for us, that we might be deliver'd from the Guilt of Sin.

Before we dismiss this Argument, it will not be amiss to answer some Objections that are alledg'd in favour of the Socinians Opinion.

Answer to
two Objec-
tions.

In the first Place then they urge, "That God when he deliver'd up his Son to Death was not angry with us, but out of Love sent us his Son: For the Scripture, when it speaks of this Mission of the Son into the World, never makes mention of the Wrath, but always of the Love of God." *Ans^r*. (1.) That God was angry with Men for their Sins is too notorious, and needs no Proof; see to this purpose among other Places, *Psal.* 5. 5. *Isa.* 59. 2. and *Coloss.* 3. 6. Nay at that very time, wherein he sent his Son into the World, the Apostle informs us that *the Wrath of God was kindled against Sin*⁷. (2.) But farther, the Wrath of God is not always taken in the same sense. Sometimes it denotes his Affection or Inclination to punish, rais'd by the Greatness and Heinousness of the Offence; yet not so join'd with an immutable purpose of punishing, but that it is often suspended by the Interposition of his

¹ *If.* 53. 10. *Eph.* 5. 3. *Heb.* 9. 14, 26. & 10. 10.
² *Rom.* 3. 25. 1 *John* 2. 2. & 4. 10. ³ *Heb.* 2. 17. ⁴ *If.*
53. 4, 5, 6. 1 *Cor.* 15. 3. *Gal.* 1. 4. 1 *Pet.* 3. 18. ⁵ *Eph.* 1.
7. *Coloss.* 1. 14. ⁶ *Mat.* 20. 28. 1 *Tim.* 2. 6. ⁷ *Rom.* 1.
18. *Eph.* 2. 3.

Love, whereby he waits for the Repentance of a Sinner, and pardons the Penitent. Sometimes it signifies the firm and immutable purpose of God to punish the Sinner'. Now in this latter sense God cannot be said to have been angry with us, when out of Love he sent his Son to us, because such Anger allows of no mixture of Love: Wrath is only ascribed in the former sense, which has some Alloy of Love and Mercy mix'd with it; that is, God shewed himself reconcilable to, and a Lover of Mankind; and therefore he deliver'd up his Son to die for us, that he might at the same time manifest his Love to Justice, and express his Willingness to be reconcil'd fully with Men, upon the Atonement made by the bloody and cruel Death of his Son. And because in this Mixture of Justice and Mercy, or of Wrath and Love, the one exceeded the other, and God out of Love to Men gave his Son to be a propitiatory Sacrifice for their Sins; hence it is that the Scripture on this Subject, never makes mention of the Anger, but always of the Love of God.

Again they object, "That the Scripture declares, that Jesus Christ died for the Confirmation and Sanction of the New Covenant, and of the Divine Promises contain'd therein, the chief of which is Remission of Sins, and Eternal Life; that by this means he might bestow upon us some sort of Right of obtaining those Promises; and then that he might prevail upon all Men to lay hold on and perform the Conditions annex'd to this Covenant." *Ans.* This is true; but the Death of Christ consider'd thus belongs to his Prophetical Office, which does both these things, as he by his Death has given an Attestation to the Truth which he preach'd. His Death then in this case is that of a Martyr, and not of a Priest; nor can the Remission of Sins be ascribed thereto, unless in a remote and improper sense, *viz.* as it confirms a Doctrine by the Observation of which we attain Remission of Sins. Now Remission of Sins might in this case be likewise ascribed to all that innumerable Company of Martyrs, who laid down their Lives for the Truth of

the Gospel, which we suppose the *Socinians* themselves will never allow of. The Death of Christ therefore must be look'd upon in another sense, viz. that of an Offering and a propitiatory Sacrifice for our Sins; and in this sense it belongs to his Priestly Office, of which we now treat.

S E C T. IV.

The Opinion of the Contra-Remonstrants concerning the Satisfaction of Jesus Christ, examin'd and refuted.

The Opinion of the Calvinists concerning the Satisfaction of Christ. The *Contra-Remonstrants* or *Calvinists* are of a quite contrary Opinion to the *Socinians*, for they maintain that Christ has satisfied the Divine Justice for our Sins. But they are not all of a mind in the manner of explaining this Opinion. Some distinguish this Act of Christ into two Parts, viz. *Merit*, which regards the perfect Righteousness of Christ, which (as they say) he perform'd in our stead, and by which he merited for us the Imputation thereof, and Eternal Life; and *Satisfaction*, whereby he endur'd in our stead all the Punishments due to our Sins, and by the suffering of them fully satisfied the Divine Justice. But others will not allow of any distinct Action in the Case, but include the Merit in the Satisfaction of Jesus Christ, saying that his Satisfaction merited Salvation and Eternal Life. As to the Words *Merit* and *Satisfaction*, they are no where to be met with in Scripture, when mention is made of the Obedience and Death of Christ, as *Maresius* himself acknowledges*; but are deduc'd from the word *Price*, ascribed to the Death of Christ, whereby Heaven is purchas'd for us†. Since therefore these Words are not extant in Holy Scripture, but are of Human Invention, no Man is bound to the Explication of them any farther than as it can be founded on those Scripture-Expressions, to the illustrating of which they are applied.

* Loc. 10. de Officio Mediatoris, §. 29. † Ibid. §. 44.

As to the Word *Merit*, it is usually plac'd in the perfect Obedience of Christ, whereby he is said to have fulfilled the Law for us, and by his Righteousness perform'd in our stead, has merited that it should be imputed to us by God the Father. But now, if Christ has by this means merited Righteousness, and so perform'd it for us, that we might in him be conformable in all things to the Law of God, nothing can be requir'd of us in order to be Partakers of that Righteousness, no not so much as that we should apprehend this Merit by Faith. We have already in Christ all that Righteousness, and Christ has already perform'd all things for us, which are necessary to our Salvation. But on the contrary, it appears from several Places of Scripture, that Faith and Holiness of Life are requir'd as necessary Conditions of attaining Eternal Life.

But to this it may be objected, If Christ has not fulfilled the Law in our stead, how is it necessary that he should be Holy and without Spot? *Ans.* Several Reasons may be assign'd for it, but those which more immediately relate to his Priestly Office, are these; That he might be a Sacrifice without Blemish, and a Holy High Priest. For he who was to offer up himself to God as a propitiatory Sacrifice for the Sins of Men, ought in all respects to be free from Sin; otherwise (as the Apostle argues¹) *he would have needed a Sacrifice for the Expiation of his own Sins.* Hence it is that he is frequently said *to be without Sin*², and is call'd *the Lamb without Blemish and without Spot*³.

Again, they urge Rom. 5. 10. *For if when we were Enemies we were reconcil'd to God by the Death of his Son; much more being reconcil'd, we shall be sav'd by his Life.*

Ans. We are not here to understand by the Life of Christ oppos'd to his Death, the Obedience which he shew'd to the Father, or his active Righteousness, as they phrase it; but the Life which he liv'd in Heaven after his Resurrection from the Dead, that he might fully and faithfully discharge the Office of our Priest before

¹ Mat. 5. 20. 1 Cor. 6. 9, 10, 11. Heb. 12. 14. 1 John 3. 7. Rom. 8. 13. Revel. 22. 14. ² Heb. 7. 26, 27. ³ 2 Cor. 5. 21. Heb. 4. 15. 1 Pet. 2. 22, 23. ⁴ 1 Pet. 1. 19.

the Father, and expiate our Sins. The meaning therefore of the Words is this: If God did that which was greater, *viz.* gave his Son to die, that he might by his Death reconcile us to himself, whilst we were his Enemies; much more will he give Eternal Life to us who are reconcil'd unto him by his Son, who is rais'd from the Dead to Immortal Life, and appears before him in our behalf.

They add, that in the same Chapter, *Ver.* 18, 19. 'tis said, *As by the Offence of one, Judgment came upon all Men to Condemnation, even so by the Righteousness of one, the Free Gift came upon all Men unto Justification of Life, &c.* *Ans.* In this Passage it is not said, that our Saviour lived righteously in our stead, or that his Righteousness is imputed to us, whilst we are yet in our Sins: but only that the Righteousness of Christ is the Cause of our Justification; or that God would impute Righteousness to us, who believe and are spiritually born again of him.

Lastly they object, *1 Cor.* 1. 30. *Christ is made unto us Wisdom, and Righteousness, and Sanctification, and Redemption.* *Ans.* It is not likewise said in this Place, that Jesus Christ liv'd righteously in our stead, or that his Righteousness is ours, and imputed to us: for then for the same reason the Wisdom of Christ should be imputed to us, since he is said to be made Wisdom as well as Righteousness to us. The meaning therefore is, that Christ was appointed by God the Father to be the Author of Wisdom, Righteousness, &c. for by him alone can we attain to true and saving Wisdom, Righteousness, &c.

The Satisfaction of Christ is said to be that whereby he has suffered all the Punishments due to our Sins, and by this Suffering has fully satisfied the Divine Justice. But this Opinion has no Foundation in Scripture, and that for the following Reasons. (1.) The Death of Christ is called a Sacrifice for Sin: Now Sacrifices are no Discharge, nor plenary Satisfaction for Sins. (2.) Christ did not suffer Eternal Death, neither in Intensity nor Extent, as we have already observ'd (*B.* 3. *C.* 3. *S.* 3.) and yet this was the Punishment due to our Sins. (3.) If Christ did fully and entirely suffer all the Punishments due to our Sins,

Sins, God then could grant nothing gratuitously to us: for if Christ has made a full Payment for us, even to the utmost Farthing, nothing is left for the Father to bestow upon us *gratis*, since his Justice is already fully satisfied. But the Scripture teaches us that God out of his own Grace and Mercy grants us Remission of Sins in Christ. (4.) If Christ has made such a Satisfaction for us, then neither could God justly require of us Faith and Obedience (which 'tis plain he does) as the means of obtaining Remission of Sins; nor could we be justly deprived of the Benefit of Christ's Death, or be punished for our Sins, tho we do not perform this Condition; for God would be unjust in exacting a double Punishment for one and the same Sin, first of Christ, and then of us. Now this is very absurd, and not only contrary to Scripture³, but destructive of a Holy Life.

To what we have said, several Objections lie, which require an Answer. In the first place they say, that Jesus is called *our Surety*, Heb. 7. 22. and that it is the Office of a Surety, where the Debtor is insolvent, to pay the whole Debt to the Creditor. Christ in the foremention'd Place is not properly call'd our Surety, but *the Surety of the New Testament*, or Covenant. (2.) Tho it were certain that Christ is our Surety in the Sanction of the New Covenant, yet he is not to be consider'd as a Security betwixt Debtor and Creditor, but as a Guarantee of the Covenant or Contract between God and Man, who undertakes to see that the Conditions of the Covenant be perform'd on both sides. So that the true Meaning of Christ's being a Surety seems to be this, not that he engages for Sinners, and takes all their Debts, and all the Punishments due to their Sins upon himself, but as he is a Surety or Mediator of the New Covenant, he by his Presence in Heaven intercedes for Men with God, and promises that sinful Men shall be converted to God, and that he by his Word and Spirit will ef-

¹ Eph. 1. 7. & 4. 32. Coloss. 1. 14. ² John 3. 16. Acts 3. 19. 1 John 1. 7. Mat. 6. 14, 15. ³ Heb. 10. 28, 29. 2 Pet. 2. 1, 2.

fect it, that so the Wrath of God may not fall upon Sinners, nor they be cut off in a moment, and excluded from Salvation.

And the Price of Redemption. Again 'tis objected, that our Saviour is often stiled *λύτρον* and *ἀντίλυτρον*, or *the Price of Redemption*; which can never be said, unless he had fully satisfied the Divine Justice, and suffer'd all those things which we deserv'd. *Ans.* They are egregiously mistaken in this, that they would have the Price of Redemption equivalent in all things to the Misery from which one is redeem'd; whereas it is usually set according to the voluntary Estimation of the Conqueror, and not according to the Worth of the Captive; one and the same Person being sometimes redeem'd for a greater, sometimes with a lesser Sum, and a meaner Person paying a greater, whilst one more noble pays a lesser Ransom, according as he who detains them is pleas'd to set a Price upon their Heads. Just thus the Price which Christ paid, was such as God the Father was pleas'd to accept of; not that it did in all things equal the Offence and Misery from whence we are thereby redeem'd.

And a Curse for They add, that *Gal. 3. 13.* we read, *Christ hath redeemed us from the Curse of the Law, being made a Curse for us.* Now, say they, to be made a Curse for any one, is the same thing as if he should take upon himself, and suffer in his stead all that Curse which the other was to endure. Wherefore since the Curse which hung over our Heads for our Sins, was Eternal Death, if Christ was made a Curse for us, it follows that he suffer'd Eternal Death for us, else he could not have redeem'd us from the Curse. *Ans.* We have just now observ'd, that in Redemption it is not necessary that the Price should in all things be equivalent to the Evil and Misery from whence we are redeem'd, but that it depends upon the Estimation of him, to whom the Price is to be paid; who may be satisfied with any Price that he is pleas'd to require. Now that our Saviour did not suffer Eternal Death, is too evident to need any Proof: nay, the Apostle himself sufficiently declares that he did not mean, that Christ took upon himself the Eternal Curse, but only the accursed Death of the Cross; for he immediately adds, *Cursed is every one who hangeth on a Tree.*

S E C T. V.

The true Opinion of the Satisfaction of Jesus Christ establish'd and maintain'd.

It now remains that we should set down our own Opinion, which is a Medium between the two other Extremes, and it is this: "That our Saviour Jesus Christ was a Sacrifice for our Sins, truly and properly so call'd; since he suffered most grievous Torments, and the accursed Death of the Cross, and after his Resurrection enter'd by his own Blood into the Celestial Tabernacle, and there presented himself before the Father: By which Sacrifice he appeas'd the Wrath of God, reconciled us to him, and averted from us the Punishment we deserv'd." This is evident from all those Places of Scripture formerly mention'd, wherein Christ is said to be *an Oblation, a Sacrifice, to die for us, to have redeem'd us, to have reconciled us to God, to have given himself a Ransom for many, &c.*

But here it may be ask'd, What was the Evil which Christ suffer'd, was it the Punishment due to our Sins? *A Question answer*

Answer. We have already shewn that our Saviour did not suffer the same Punishment which we deserv'd for our Sins, for he did not suffer Eternal Death. But he endur'd great Misery and a bloody Death in our place, which was instead of that Punishment which might justly have been inflicted upon us. So that tho we had deserv'd Eternal Death, yet God was pleas'd by this voluntary Sacrifice, which his innocent Son offer'd for us, to be reconcil'd, and to receive us into his Favour. We had deserv'd a greater and severer Punishment for our Sins; but God accepted of this Atonement made by the Death of Jesus Christ, and thereby display'd the Greatness of his Grace and Mercy, even whilst he requir'd Satisfaction to be made to his affronted and injured Justice.

To this it may be objected, If Christ made Satisfaction for us only in this manner, then he did not merit Faith and Regeneration for us. *Answer.* This is true; he merited, *i. e.* obtain'd of God for us a Suspension

sion of his Wrath, an Allowance of farther time of Repentance, and a gracious Call to Faith and Regeneration; nay, and bestow'd upon us all the Assistances of Grace whereby we might be able to hearken to the Divine Call: but he did not merit for us Faith and Regeneration it self. Had this been so, God could not have requir'd it of us under the Denunciation of Death; he would then by virtue of Christ's Merit have been oblig'd to have wrought it in us by his Almighty Power; and so it would not have been our Duty, but the Act of God alone.

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It may be urged farther, that it seems absurd and repugnant to the Nature of God, that he should require a Human Sacrifice, nay even that of his own only begotten Son; and that this favours of Cruelty. *Ans.* By no means; for the Absurdity, if any arises from hence, is either because God will'd the Death of his Son; or because he will'd him to suffer Death as an Expiatory Sacrifice for our Sins. But there is no Absurdity in either of these. Not in the former; because God the Father having an uncontrollable Power over all Men as to Life and Death, has also a Right of delivering up his Son to Death. Nor is there any Absurdity in the latter; since if God might deliver his Son to die as a Prophet, that he might by his Blood as of a federal Victim establish the New Covenant (which the Objectors themselves own) why was it less allowable to the Father to require, that his Son should die as a Propitiatory Sacrifice for Sins, and thereby intercede for Sinners as a sanctified Priest? For certainly if he could have put his Son to Death, he had also a Right of directing his Death to such an End, as was most suitable to his Glory and the Salvation of Mankind.

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nc'd.*

But here again it may be retorted; Since God forbid any Human Sacrifices to be offer'd to him, it seems absurd that he should will Christ to die as a Sacrifice for Men. *Ans.* (1.) God in prescribing a Law to Men of not offering Human Sacrifices, did not prescribe a Law to himself of never requiring a Human Sacrifice, as is plain from the Instance of *Isaac*. (2.) God did

not command Men to offer Jesus Christ to him as a Sacrifice for their Sins; that Thought be far from us: But he only left him to the Power of wicked Men, and Christ freely deliver'd himself into their Hands, that they might out of Envy kill him: And this ignominious Death of his Son, tho design'd to another End by the *Jews*, was the Father pleas'd to allow of as an Expiatory Sacrifice for Sins.

Very likely it may be demanded; How could, *A Query* and really did, the Sacrifice of one Man suffice for the *answer'd* expiating the innumerable Sins of so many Myriads of Men in the World? *Ans.* It was sufficient upon these two accounts. (1.) Upon the account of the Divine Will, which requir'd nothing more for the Redemption of Mankind, but was satisfied with this single Sacrifice. And certainly if God (who, as we observ'd before, has an absolute Power of declaring what Ransom will satisfy him) was pleas'd to accept of the Sacrifices under the Law as expiatory of the Sins of the People¹; why should not, by the same Divine Will, the Blood of Jesus Christ be sufficient to atone for all the Sins of the whole World? (2.) Upon the account of the Dignity of the Person of Jesus Christ, who is the Son of God, nay who is over all, God blessed for ever². True it is, he suffered only in his Human Nature; yet since it was united to the Divine, the very Eternal Son of God may rightly be said to have suffered whatsoever the Man Christ Jesus endur'd in the Flesh for Sinners. Besides, if Christ be consider'd only as a M A N, the Excellency of his Person upon several accounts was so great, that he surpass'd in a high measure all the rest of Mankind. Now who can question, but that this Dignity of the Person of Christ did mightily enhance the Merit of his Passion?

¹ Lev. 16. ² Rom. 9. 5.

S E C T. VI.

Of the blessed Effects of the Priestly Office of
Jesus Christ.

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Christ's
Priestly Of-
fice as to
himself.

The Effects of this Priestly Office are such as relate either to our Saviour himself, or to us. The former of these, is his obtaining by his Blood and Death the supreme Power both in Heaven and in Earth; whereby he is able to preserve all those who sincerely obey him, and put their Trust in him¹: as also procuring the Holy Ghost, whom he sent down from Heaven upon his Apostles after his Ascension, and those who believ'd in him².

he Effects
of it rela-
ting to us.

The Effects, so far as they have regard to Us, are (1.) The Confirmation of the Christian Religion; for since God has exalted our Priest to Heaven, he has confirm'd the Truth of it, and shew'd that it shall last for ever. For the Priestly Office is the Basis of Religion and Divine Worship, which being taken away, the Worship must of necessity be chang'd. Hence the Apostle infers³ that the *Levitical* Worship was not perpetual, because its Priesthood was to be succeeded by another more excellent. Since therefore our Saviour has obtain'd this better Priesthood, and none more excellent is to succeed, it follows that our Worship is acceptable to God, and will not be abrogated, but will be perpetual.

(2.) Another Effect of Christ's Priestly Office is our Reconciliation with God, which appears from the Expressions of *Reconciling*, *Propitiating*, and *Redeeming*, which frequently occur in Sacred Writ.

Reconcilia-
tion be-
tween God
and Man
admits of a
twofold
Considera-
tion.

Now this Reconciliation may be consider'd, either as it precedes our Faith and Conversion, or as it follows it. In the former sense it consists in this, that God being pleas'd by the Death of Christ, made a

¹ Luk. 24. 26, 46. Philip. 2. 8, 9. Heb. 7. 26. & 12. 1, 2.

² John 7. 39. & 15. 26. & 16. 7. Acts 2. 1, &c. ³ Heb. 7. 11, &c.

New Covenant with Men, wherein he is ready to bestow upon all Men the Remission of all Sins and Eternal Life, provided they believe in Christ, and live according to the Rule he has prescrib'd, *i. e.* observe the Conditions of the New Covenant: and in the mean time whilst this Gospel of Grace is announc'd to them, he bears with, and grants them a longer time of Repentance. In the latter sense Reconciliation consists in a full Application of Pardon, whereby the Remission obtain'd for all is particularly applied to those who believe and perform their Duty, and their Sins are actually blotted out, that so they may attain Eternal Life.

From what has been said 'tis plain, that in order to obtain a plenary Remission of Sins, purchas'd by the Death of Christ, Faith and Repentance are requir'd on Man's part, without which no Man will be Partaker of the Benefit of Reconciliation. For should we suppose that a plenary Remission of Sins was purchas'd for us by the Death of Christ alone, before any Act of Faith and Repentance on our part; then it must be said, that the preaching of the Gospel, with the Promise of Pardon to Believers, and the Threatning of Death and the Wrath of God to Unbelievers, so frequently to be met with in the New Testament, would have been in vain.

However, to what we have said they usually object in several Places of Scripture, as first *Isa. 53. 5.* where we are said *to be healed with his Stripes.* *Objec^{tion} from* *Scriptur^e* *answer'd* *Isa. 53. explain'd.* *Ans^w.* This is not said because the Death of Christ alone, without our Faith and Repentance, confers upon us a complete Freedom from all Sin, but because by the Intervention of our Saviour's Death as an Expiatory Sacrifice we do obtain it. So that the true Meaning of the Prophet is, that by the Blood of Christ Grace and Favour is obtain'd for us, and the Remission of our Sins is to be attributed to the Efficacy of that Blood: Which we freely own, tho we press the Necessity of Faith and Repentance for the attaining a plenary Remission of Sin.

Again they urge, that *Mat. 26. 28.* 'tis said, that *the Blood of Christ was shed for the Remission of Sins.* *Mat. 28. explain'd.* *Ans^w.* This is what we grant, who at the same time maintain the Necessity of Faith and Repentance. 'Tis certainly

certainly the End of Christ's Death, that Remission might be had, but upon what Condition 'tis to be obtain'd, the Scripture does elsewhere teach us.

om. 5. Thirdly they add, that *Rom. 5. 9, 10.* we are said
10. ex- to be justified by the Blood and Death of Christ, in oppo-
in'd. sition to his Life. Answ. We are said to be justified by the Blood of Christ, as the Cause which mov'd God to be willing to impute Righteousness to us Sinners; however not without Faith, which God himself has propos'd as the Condition of Justification: But because the Blood of Christ is the Cause why our Faith and Repentance are acceptable to God for the obtaining of Pardon, therefore it is that in the Business of Justification mention is made of the Blood of Christ only.

Joh. 1. 7. Lastly, they urge 1 John 1. 7. *The Blood of Jesus*
plain'd. *Christ cleanseth us from all Sin.* Answ. Here it is plain that they separate two things which are join'd together, and ought never to be put asunder. For the Apostle joins the cleansing from all Sin by the Blood of Christ with walking in the Light; nay requires such a Walking as a necessary Condition, without which the other cannot be obtain'd.

objections drawn from Reason To these Places of Scripture they add some Objections drawn from Reason, which we will briefly set down and answer.

The first runs thus: "If by and for the Blood of Christ, Sins are not remitted actually and really to those for whom he died; then no Man is saved or placed in a State of Salvation by him." Answ. We deny the Consequence of this Argument, if by actual and real Remission they mean such a full Pardon, to which Salvation is immediately annex'd, concerning which alone the Dispute is. For tho this plenary Remission were not obtain'd by all for whom Christ died, yet it cannot from thence be infer'd, that no Man is saved or placed in a State of Salvation by Christ; because he has procur'd for all, for whom he died, such a degree of Remission, as that the way of Salvation is open'd to them, and Grace granted them for

the obtaining thereof, which if they do not reject, they will really attain to Salvation by Christ. So that such are really placed in a State of Salvation, not indeed in that which is call'd proximate and immediate, but in a remote State.

The second Objection is this: "If by the Death of Christ, Sins are not actually remitted, then our Lord is no more than a Saviour *ex parte*, since he has only prepar'd or open'd the way for the Remission of Sins by his Death." *Ans.* We again deny the Consequence of this Argument. For tho the Death of Christ alone doth not confer actual and plenary Remission of Sins, yet it does not follow from thence that Christ is only half a Saviour. For the whole Work of Redemption is not compleated by the Death of Christ alone; as a King he likewise applies his Word and Spirit, by virtue of which both Faith and Repentance are wrought in us, and so we are plac'd according to the Promises of God in a State of Salvation; whatsoever therefore was requisite to that end, is perform'd by Jesus Christ.

A third Objection is, "If actual Remission of Sins be not procur'd by the Blood of Christ, then the Sin of *Adam* is more powerful to condemn, than the Death of Christ is to save us; but the contrary to this is proved by the Apostle, *Rom. 5. 15, 18.*" *Ans.* Again the Consequence is denied. For tho the Death of Christ does not immediately confer upon us a plenary Absolution, yet it bestows it in certain degrees appointed by God for that end. By the very Act of dying he procur'd, that we might obtain a Freedom from Death; and then by his Word and Spirit, which he purchas'd for us by his Death, he has pluck'd us out of Darkness, and entirely preserves us from Death and Damnation. And by this means he is more powerful to save than *Adam* was to damn us.

The fourth Objection is, "If Christ by his Death did not reconcile us to God, then he did not reconcile us at all; for Reconciliation is no Reconciliation unless it be actual." *Ans.* 'Tis true that there is no Reconciliation unless it be actual; but Reconciliation has its degrees, the one more perfect than the other.

ther. It by no means therefore follows, if Christ has not reconcil'd us in the most perfect degree of Reconciliation, that he has not reconcil'd us at all. For he has reconcil'd us actually by his Death, tho in a more imperfect manner, but upon our Faith and Repentance he reconciles us most perfectly, and brings us to Everlasting Life.

The fifth and last Objection runs thus, " Either we are reconcil'd by the Death of Christ absolutely, or conditionally: If absolutely, then there is a plenary Remission of Sins; if conditionally, then the Efficacy of Christ's Death depends on Man's Free-Will." *Ans.* In the more imperfect degree we are reconcil'd absolutely, since no Condition was requir'd by God for Christ's dying for us: but for the obtaining the more perfect degree of Reconciliation, the Condition of Faith and Repentance is requir'd on our part. Nor does it from thence follow that the Efficacy of Christ's Death depends on Man's Free-will, for he cannot by his Faith bestow, nor by his Infidelity take away the Efficacy thereof: But only the Effect, for which Christ died, is obtain'd by the Faith and Obedience of Man.

Having answer'd all those Objections, we proceed to consider the third Effect of Christ's Priestly Office, which is the being freed from the Yoke of Legal Ceremonies: Thus the Apostle tells us, *That Christ has taken out of the way, and nail'd to his Cross, the Hand-writing of Ordinances, that was against us, and which was contrary to us*; thereby denoting that upon the Death of Christ those Legal Ceremonies were at an end, and abolish'd.

The Use we ought to make of the Consideration of Christ's Priestly Office, may be summ'd up in the following Particulars. (1.) We ought to acknowledg the Love of God to us Sinners, in that he gave his only begotten Son to die for us². (2.) We ought to acknowledg the Love of Christ, who became obedient to the Father to Death, even the Death of the Cross, and freely took upon himself the Curse, that he might de-

¹ Col. 2. 14. ² John 3. 16.

liver us from it, and be the Author of Salvation to all who obey him'. (3.) We may from hence learn what a hatred God bears to Sin, in that he requir'd the bloody and accursed Death of his most beloved Son as a propitiatory Sacrifice, whereby he would be inclin'd to pardon our Sins. (4.) From hence we may likewise learn to hate Sin, as being so odious to God, that he would not pardon the Guilt of it but by such a precious Sacrifice as was that of the Death of his Son. (5.) Upon the Contemplation of the Love of God the Father and his Son Jesus Christ towards us, we may ground our Faith and Hope of the Pardon of all our past Sins, and thereby be excited to amend our Lives and obey the Commands of God, and not despair of the Divine Favour upon the account of the Greatness of our past Transgressions. (6.) And lastly, we may learn so to trust on God for Pardon, and to obey him by a Holy and Religious Life, as that we may attain to Peace of Conscience, Peace with God, and at last the Eternal Happiness of Heaven.

C H A P. VI.

Of the Kingly Office of Christ.

THE last and most excellent Office of Christ, as our Mediator is the Kingly or Regal. As a Prophet he preach'd, as a Priest he obtain'd, but as a King he actually bestows Salvation upon us. There are four things considerable in the Kingly Office of Christ; First, its Reality: Secondly, its Extent: Thirdly, its Functions or Acts: Fourthly, its Duration. Of these things we will treat distinctly in two Sections.

¹ Heb. 5, 8, 9, 10.

S E C T. I.

Of the Reality and Extent of Christ's Kingdom.

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The first Particular to be consider'd, is the Reality of Christ's Kingdom; and that we may discourse the more distinctly upon it, 'tis to be noted, that Divines usually consider it in a twofold sense: In the first, they understand that Kingdom which is essential and common to the Father and the Son, as being the WORD of God: In the other, that which belongs to Jesus Christ as Mediator betwixt God and Man, which for distinction sake they usually stile the *Mediatorial Kingdom*. In this latter sense it is that we shall treat of it.

free De-
ees of it.

And therein, according to the account given of it in Scripture, we may observe three degrees. (1.) That Jesus Christ was born a King and a Lord, and from his Birth was a King by Right and Design¹. (2.) That in the Execution of his Office he was endued by God the Father with the Holy Spirit given him without measure, and even on Earth gave Demonstrations of his Regal Authority, and shew'd the Dominion he had over every thing by the many and great Miracles he wrought. But in these Degrees the Fulness of his Majesty did not appear; and tho Christ gave some Signs of his being a King, yet by the mean and abject State wherein he lived, his Glory was as it were eclipsed, and hid under a Cloud. Therefore (3.) the highest degree of Christ's Kingdom, mention'd and refer'd to in the New Testament, and of which we shall give an account in the Sequel, is that which he obtain'd after his Resurrection from the Dead, and Ascension into Heaven; where being exalted at the right Hand of God, he hath receiv'd all Power both in Heaven and Earth, and reigns gloriously over all things².

¹ Luk. 1. 31, 32. & 2. 11.
Heb. 2. 7, 8, 9.

² Mat. 28. 18. Acts 2. 33.

I. That our Saviour has obtain'd, and does actually administer this Kingdom, is so clearly taught us in Scripture, that it may seem needless to prove it. However for the sake of some *Semi-judaizing* Christians I shall endeavour farther to establish this Truth. They suppose, that the Lord Jesus does not now reign in Heaven, but is at rest, and sits idly at the right Hand of God, and that his Kingdom will not begin, till after all Nations of the Earth have embrac'd the Gospel, all his Enemies be subdued, and especially Antichrist, who sits in the Temple of God, and oppresses the Church by his Tyranny. But how gross and false a Conception these Men have of the Nature of Christ's Kingdom, will most evidently appear by the following Arguments taken from the Holy Scripture. (1.) Our Saviour himself, a little before his Ascension, tells his Disciples, *That all Power was given to him in Heaven and in Earth*¹; which Words plainly denote that our Saviour was already invested with Regal Authority, and that it was not to be given to him only hereafter. (2.) The same thing is evinc'd by the Effusion of the Holy Ghost on the Apostles on the Day of Pentecost, and the Effects of it, all fully accomplish'd according to the express Promise and Prediction of our Blessed Saviour. (3.) There are several Places of Scripture² which expressly declare that Christ has already obtain'd his Kingdom, and especially 1 Cor. 15. 25, 26. wherein the Apostle tells us, that Christ's Kingdom was not to begin after his Enemies were destroy'd, but that it was already present, and that Christ himself should subdue all his Enemies, and his Reign should last so long, till *Death, the last Enemy*, by the General Resurrection, *should be put under his Feet*. (4.) In the *Revelation* of St. John we have such evident Testimonies of Christ's Kingdom being already begun, as cannot with any colour of Reason be denied by any who own the Authority of that Book. For in the three first Chapters are manifest Signs of his Kingdom being present, wherein Christ attributes to

Reality
Christ's
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several Ar-
guments.

¹ Mat. 28. 18. ² Acts 5. 31. Eph. 1. 20, 21, &c. Phil. 2. 8, 9, 10, 11. 1 Pet. 3. 22.

himself such a Providential Care of his Churches, as belongs wholly to the Power and Authority of a King. (5.) To these we may add the Wishes and Prayers at the Beginning and End of the Epistles, and elsewhere, in which Grace and Peace are desir'd of Jesus Christ, and sometimes he is expressly stiled LORD: All which would have been trifling and needless, had not our Lord been invested with a Regal Power, whereby to be able to bestow those good things on them who call upon him.

Heb. 2. 8. To what we have said some object, That the Apostle *Heb. 2. 8.* says, *But we see not yet all things put under him.* Ans^r. By these Words it is not meant that our Lord Jesus has not a Dominion over all things, or that he was not invested with a Power of bringing all things in subjection under him; but only, that as yet he had not destroyed all his Enemies. For the Kingdom was given to the Lord Jesus by the Father, that he might destroy all the Enemies who oppos'd the Divine Glory and Man's Happiness. This he does not all at once, but by degrees, and as long as this World lasts, wherein he invites Men to Salvation, patiently waits for their Repentance, and defers punishing, that the more may attain Everlasting Happiness. But at last upon the Consummation of Ages, he will destroy all his Enemies, even Death the last Enemy, and will cast the Wicked together with the Devil into Eternal Fire.

Wherein
Christ's
Kingdom
consists.

But it is not enough to know that our Saviour does actually reign in Heaven, unless we duly apprehend wherein this his Kingly Dignity consists. Now herein these three things are most considerable: (1.) The Eminence and Honour of it, whereby he is exalted above all created Beings, whether invisible or visible, being higher than the Highest of them, next to the Father in Authority, and owning none but him as his Superior. (2.) The Power, Right and Dominion which he has over all things, so as to subject them to himself, and to have the full Command over them. (3.) He is more peculiarly appointed the King and Judge of Men, that he might prescribe them Rules of Life, and judge them according to their Works, whether they be good or bad.

Now,

Now, in order to exercise this Supreme Power, he is *Attributes* endu'd with those Qualifications and Attributes, that *necessary* are requisite for the Administration of such a Kingdom, *thereto.* such as these: (1.) Wisdom and Omniscience, ascrib'd to him whilst on Earth¹, and afterwards when advanc'd to Heaven². (2.) Justice, whereby he will reward every Man according to his Works³, and that without respect of Persons⁴. (3.) Omnipotence⁵.

II. As to the Extent of Christ's Kingdom, it is so *2. The* great as to be circumscrib'd within no Bounds: For it *Extent of* is Universal, over all things, nothing being exempted *Christ's* from his Dominion, but God only, who has put all *Kingdom.* things under him. His Dominion is extended over Heaven and Earth, over the whole World of Spirits both good and bad, over the Greatest Potentate, as well as the meanest Slave; making all the Creatures one way or other his Instruments to promote his Glory, and enlarge his Kingdom. This is so plainly declar'd in the Holy Scriptures all along, that every one who runs may read, and clearly discern the Characters of Christ's Royalty, and the Extent of it.

However, after all 'tis not to be suppos'd that Christ's *Subordi-* Dominion is as absolutely Sovereign, as the Kingdom *nate to th* of the Father, but is subordinate thereto: For God the *Kingdom* Father has not divested himself of all Power, nor has *of the Fa-* he deliver'd the Care and Government of the World *ther.* to his Son, so as to be only an idle Spectator. It is therefore a special Office delegated by God the Father to Jesus Christ as he is the Redeemer and Saviour of Mankind, for the procuring of their Salvation, with a full Power over all things, that he may use them at pleasure for the obtaining that End. However this Office is always administer'd with Submission to the Father, under whose Authority it is; so that the Father, properly speaking, governs by and through his Son.

¹ John 2. 25. ² Rev. 2. 23. ³ Mat. 16. 27. Rom. 2. 6.
⁴ 2 Cor. 5. 10. ⁵ Rom. 2. 11. Col. 3. 25. Rev. 6. 15, 16.
 If. 11. 4. 2 Thess. 1. 7. & 2. 8.

S E C T. II.

Of the Regal Functions or Acts of Christ, and the Duration of his Kingdom.

3. *The Regal Acts of Christ.* III. The Functions or Acts relating to the Kingdom of Christ, whether already done, or still to be exercis'd, may be reduc'd to these three general Heads:
1. *His calling Men to partake of his Kingdom.* 1. The first is, his inviting or calling of Men to be Partakers of his Kingdom. For our Saviour did not at first meet with Subjects that obey'd him, but out of his mere Bounty he invited Men to the participation of his Kingdom. To this purpose he appointed a Ministry, set apart some Ministers, and endu'd them with the extraordinary Gifts of the Holy Ghost, that they might be enabled to preach the Gospel to all Men, of all Nations and Languages; and thereby erect and enlarge the Kingdom of Christ, and call in not only the *Jews*, but the Fulness of the *Gentiles* to be Partakers of it.
 2. *Prescribing Laws.* 2. The Second Act of Christ's Kingly Office, is prescribing Laws to those whom he calls into his Kingdom, which Laws are, Faith and Repentance, or Holiness of Life; *i. e.* A Life worthy of that glorious Vocation, and becoming the Subjects of that happy Kingdom; to which was annex'd the Promise of most perfect Happiness, and the Threatning of Damnation to the Disobedient.
 3. *Judging of Men.* 3. The Third Act, and the most evident Token of Christ's Regal Power, is the Judgment which he exercises both in this World and in that which is to come, with respect both to Believers who own him for their King, and Infidels who reject and rebel against him. As to those who believe in him, he in this World encourages and supports such as persevere in their Duty, and chastises those who are remiss and fall into Sin, that they may repent, be more zealous, and obtain Pardon. As to Infidels, he blinds their Eyes, hardens their Hearts, gives them over to a reprobate Sense and a strong Delusion, that they should believe a Lye, and sometimes inflicts Temporal Punishments upon 'em
ever

even in this Life. But in the next World this Judgment will be Universal, extend to all Mankind, whom he will raise from the Dead, and place before his August Tribunal, and will render to all Men according to their Works; to the Good and Pious, Glory and Immortality; but to the Wicked and Impious, Shame, Tribulation and Anguish.

From these Acts, which the Scripture ascribes to our Saviour as a Celestial King, if compared with the Acts of his Priestly Office, we may clearly perceive the difference between the one and the other. For all the Acts of the Priestly Office primarily and directly relate to God; but those of the Kingly Office primarily and directly regard Men, and have reference to their Repentance and Salvation.

By what we have hitherto said concerning the Regal Office of Christ, we may easily perceive what to think of their Opinion, who tell us, "That Jesus Christ before the last Judgment shall descend upon the Earth, convert the Jews, bring them back to the Land of Canaan, restore Jerusalem with the Temple and Levitical Worship, and cause the Law of Moses to be observed by all Men, even by the Gentiles who have embraced Christianity; and that before this the Martyrs shall be raised from the Dead, and reign with Christ a thousand Years." Now the Absurdity and Extravagance of this Opinion will appear, if we consider, (1.) That it tends to the Subversion of the Kingdom of Christ, which he now holds in Heaven. (2.) Either he now reigns in Heaven; or else there is a twofold Kingdom of Christ, one in Heaven, the other on Earth, which is contrary to what himself tells us, *That his Kingdom is not of this World*. (3.) We are informed by Scripture, that he will not descend from Heaven corporeally, till the Day of Judgment. (4.) This Kingdom they talk of, will be either a Kingdom of Remuneration, and then the Universal Judgment will begin with it; or of Legislation, and then his Subjects may rebel and revolt from him;

¹ John 18. 36.

² Acts 9. 21. Col. 3. 3, 4. 1 Theſſ.

4. 16.

or lastly it must be said, that God by an irresistible Power will work Obedience in their Hearts, and then by this means this Kingdom may be composed of Wicked as well as Good Men, and so the whole course of Divine Providence, which has hitherto prevailed in the World, will be rendered useless and insignificant.

lev. 20.4. To this they object, that *Rev. 20. 4.* when mention is made of the Martyrs who were beheaded for the Witness of Jesus, 'tis said, *they should reign with Christ a Thousand Years.* Answ. (1.) This is the only Passage whereon this Opinion is founded; and 'tis very probable, were it not for this Text, they would never have applied the Prophecies of the Old Testament to this purpose. But 'tis to be remember'd, that this Book of the *Revelation* is very obscure, and so no solid Argument can be drawn from thence by a mere Conjecture, whereon to establish any Point of Doctrine. (2.) Tho 'tis there said, that the Martyrs shall reign with Christ; yet it cannot be from thence infer'd, that Christ will reside here on Earth. (3.) No mention is here made of the Restoration of the *Jews* to their own Country, or of the Levitical Worship.

The Millenarians
Opinion re-
uted.

As to those, who suppose that Christ will come down upon Earth, and never return with his Followers to Heaven; and those who most grossly maintain that Christ and his will enjoy all the Delights and Pleasures of the Flesh; their Opinions do not deserve a Refutation, the one smelling too much of a Carnal Mind, and both of them contrary to Scripture'. We shall therefore only examine and refute the Opinion of those *Millenarians*, who attribute a more Spiritual Kingdom to Christ upon Earth. But even these are divided in their Sentiments so much, that their Variety is a sufficient Argument to evince that nothing of certainty can be deduced from Scripture about it. On the one hand, some are of Opinion that this Kingdom is already passed, but they are not all of them agreed when it began. For some date its Beginning at the time of *Constantine* the Great, and its End about the

¹ John 14. 2, 3. 2 Cor. 5. 2. Luke 20. 35. 1 Cor. 6. 13.

Year 1300, when the *Ottoman* Empire began. But others, and those the greater Number, fix its Beginning at the time when the Gospel began to be preached, for then (say they) according to several Places of Scripture¹, *Satan* began to be bound. But if we reflect upon the History of those times, we shall find that what is said² of the *binding of Satan*, of his being cast into the *Bottomless Pit*, of that *Pit's* being shut up and sealed, that *Satan* might not deceive the Nations any more, till the *Thousand Years* should be fulfilled, cannot in any tolerable Sense be applied to these times. For during that whole Period, *Satan* did very much exert his Power, by raising very severe Persecutions against the Church in the first four Centuries of Christianity; and in the following six he seduced Men, by degrees won upon them to fall from the Sincerity of their Faith, and wrought the Mystery of Iniquity in them.

Others on the contrary maintain, that those Thousand Years are not yet fulfilled; but that Christ without descending upon Earth shall reign from Heaven, just as he now reigns in it. This Kingdom they make to consist, in Christ's granting his Church a rest from Persecutions before the last Judgment, in his affording the *Jews* a greater measure of Grace than before, and converting them to himself, according to the Prediction of the Apostle³. And this they would have to be intimated not only by *Rev.* 20. but also by several Places of the Old and New Testament, wherein under the Figure of recalling the *Jews* from their Dispersion, they suppose to be shadowed out their Conversion to Christ, and being gathered into one Body with the *Gentiles*, as also a greater Peace than has hitherto flourished in the World. And at that time (add they) the Martyrs shall be raised again from the Dead. But without taking notice of the Variety of Sentiments in this matter, as I would not condemn this Opinion as false, so I cannot perceive any sufficient Arguments to convince me of the Truth of it; especially considering that this peaceable and happy State of the Church

¹ Mat. 12. 29. Luke 10. 18. John 12. 31, 32. Acts 26. 18. Eph. 4. 8. Col. 2. 15. Heb. 2. 14. ² Rev. 20. 3. ³ Rom. 11. 25, 26.

seems not to agree with those many Predictions of bearing the Cross, to be met with in the New Testament.

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Upon the whole matter, considering the Diversity of Opinions about this Kingdom, and that all of them are founded only on one obscure and mysterious Place of Scripture, it is better I think to suspend one's Judgment, than to determine any thing peremptorily on either side. And should any be pleased to determine any thing on this Point, let them remember to be so just, as not imperiously to impose their Opinion on others, nor rashly to damn those who dissent from them.

The Du-
tion of
Christ's
Kingdom.

IV. The last thing to be consider'd by us, is the Duration of Christ's Kingdom, which is Eternal; *for of his Kingdom there shall be no End*, as the Angel assured the Virgin Mary, Luke 1. 32.

Obiecti-
on answer-
ed. 1 Cor.
24, &c.
plained.

But to this it may be objected, that the Apostle says, 1 Cor. 15. 24, &c. *Then cometh the End, when he shall have delivered up the Kingdom to God even the Father, &c. And when all things shall be subdued unto him, then shall the Son also be subject to him, that put all things under him, that God may be all in all.* Answ. We readily acknowledg, that there are several things in this Passage which prove, that at the end of the World, Christ's Mediatorial Kingdom will have an end; but they by no means contradict those other Texts, where the Kingdom of the Messiah is said to be Eternal. For the Mediatorial Kingdom, consider'd as an Act of the Mediator bringing us to Salvation, is not and cannot be called absolutely Eternal; but either comparatively so, and in opposition to the Kings and Kingdoms of this World, which devolve either upon the Death of former Kings, or by hostile Force, upon other Successors; whereas Christ being an Immortal King, crowned with Power and Glory over all, will not and cannot have any Successor: Or else it may be stiled Eternal, because it shall last to the End of the World, and as long as the Nature of that Kingdom will admit. However, even after the last Judgment our Lord will not be divested of his Kingdom and Glory, but will triumph at the Head of his Church, and reign for ever with the Father, and then his Glory shall have its most perfect Consummation: So that tho his Mediatorial Kingdom will cease, yet of his Kingdom of Glory there will be no end.

Since

Since these things are so, it follows that our Lord Jesus has no VICAR of his Kingdom here on Earth, but administers all things immediately by himself from Heaven; and being always with us, and both able and willing to discharge the several Acts relating to his Kingdom, he has no need of any Substitute, nor can this pretended spiritual Vice-Roy have any Authority, since his Sovereign is always present. So that the Doctrine of the Pope's being Christ's Vicar here on Earth falls to the ground, since our Lord has not only not appointed such an Officer over his Church, and forbid his Apostles to exercise Authority and Lordship over one another; but is himself the only Head of his Church, which is his Mystical Body. But of these things more hereafter.

The Use we ought to make of the Doctrine of Christ's Kingly Office, may be reduc'd to the following Heads. (1.) To contemplate the Honour and Glory of God, who in sending this King testify'd not only the highest Goodness and Love to Mankind, but also his Faithfulness, in that he fulfil'd all the Promises made by the Prophets to our Forefathers. (2.) To acknowledge and confess his Sovereignty over us; for to this end *was there a Name given to Christ above every Name, that every Tongue should confess that Jesus is the Lord*¹. (3.) To adore him as our Supreme Lord and King². (4.) To obey his Commands. This he himself enjoins³, and therefore is said *to be the Author of Salvation to all those who obey him*⁴; and it is so necessary a Duty, that St. John assures us⁵, *If any one saith I know him, and keepeth not his Commandments, he is a Liar, and the Truth is not in him*. (5.) To bear up under Adversities of what kind soever, especially those which we suffer for his Name's sake, being assur'd that our Jesus is in Heaven, not only a merciful High Priest, tempted in all things as we are, yet without Sin, that he might have Compassion on our Infirmities; but also as a King, invested with Divine Power, who will afford us help in time of need, when we flee to the Throne of Grace, and with Faith implore his Assistance⁶.

¹ Phil. 2. 11. ² John 5. 22, &c. ³ Mat. 28. 19. ⁴ Heb. 5. 9. ⁵ 1 John 2. 4. ⁶ Heb. 4. 15, 16.

C H A P. VII.

*How Jesus Christ is our Saviour by his
three Offices.*

*ist our
Saviour by
three-
Office.*

Hitherto we have run through the Offices of Christ, by the Administration of which he procures our Salvation: It now remains that we should more closely apply them to the Work of our Salvation, and consider on what account he may be said to be our Saviour by the Execution of these three Offices. We have already shewn that the Misery from which we were deliver'd was not one, but manifold, *viz.* the Slavery of Sin, and Death. According to this our Misery, the Offices of Christ in delivering us from it are various.

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I. Our Lord procures Salvation for us by his Prophetical Office, as he frees us from the Slavery of Sin, calls us to the Liberty of the Sons of God, and places us in a State of Salvation. In order to this he has exercis'd these four Acts: (1.) He has preach'd his Holy and Perfect Doctrine, containing the Precept of Repentance and a Holy Life, and the Promise of Remission of Sins, and Eternal Life. (2.) He has confirm'd this Doctrine by many and unheard of Miracles, sufficient to convince Men, and persuade them to believe in Christ as a great Prophet, and to look upon his Doctrine as Divine; that so by Faith and Obedience they might attain Eternal Salvation. (3.) He gave us an Example of an innocent and blameless Life, most exactly conformable to all his Precepts: by which he confirm'd the Divinity of those Precepts, proved that they might be observ'd by the Practisers of Piety, and encourag'd others after his Example to enter into Life Everlasting. (4.) He suffer'd a bloody, most bitter and ignominious Death, by which he not only set his Seal to his Doctrine as a faithful Witness, but also as a federal Victim ratified and establish'd the very Tables of the New Covenant.

From all these Particulars we may very fairly infer, *And is therefore our Saviour.* that our Lord Jesus with respect to his Prophetical Office is, and may very justly be stiled our Saviour. For the Scripture says of the Apostles, who were only the Ministers and Witnesses of our Lord in the Administration of their Office, that they sav'd and regenerated those whom they taught and converted by the Power and Efficacy of the Divine Word which they had received from the Lord¹. Nay, every private Christian who performs the same Act of Charity to his Neighbour, is said to save him². With much more reason may the Title of Saviour be attributed to our Lord Jesus Christ, the Great Prophet and Angel of the New Covenant, which he publish'd in the Name of God, confirm'd with Miracles and an exemplary Life, and at last seal'd and establish'd it by his Death.

II. Our Lord Jesus by his Priestly Office has in a *2. By Priestly* more especial manner perfected the Work of Salvation, *by two Acts peculiar and proper to that Office, viz. he* Oblation and Intercession, whereby he has fully *satisfied the most righteous Will of the Father, fulfilled* *taken a the Gu* all things requisite for our Salvation, and by being *of Sin, therefor* made an expiatory Sacrifice for our Sins, has wiped *our Sa* away all the Guilt of them, and open'd a way to us *our.* to approach the Throne of Grace. From hence then we conclude, that the Title of Saviour does very justly belong to the Lord Jesus as he is our Priest, and that upon these two accounts: (1.) Because he has paid down and compleatly perform'd whatsoever God requir'd for the Redemption of Mankind; *he has redeem'd us, not with corruptible things as Silver and Gold, but with his own most precious Blood³*: He suffer'd the accursed Death of the Cross, gave himself a Ransom for us, and relies so much upon that Price, that he still intercedes for us with the Father, and most effectually obtains Remission of Sins. (2.) Because he was both Sacrifice and Priest, he paid to the Father not a typical but a real Price of Redemption, and by his Blood

¹ Rom. 11. 14. 1 Cor. 4. 15. & 9. 22. 1 Tim. 4. 16.
² 1 Cor. 7. 16. Jam. 5. 20. ³ 1 Pet. 1. 18, 19.

has open'd as it were the Gates of Heaven to us. This Method of saving Men by the Priestly Office, is peculiar to the Lord Jesus alone : so that tho the Apostles and others who convert Men by the preaching of the Gospel, may in some sense be said to imitate Christ's Prophetical Office, and to be on that account at least partly the Saviours of others ; yet none of them can pretend to be Partners in this Privilege. Their Deaths at most were only so many Demonstrations of the Truth of the Doctrine which they preach'd ; whereas the Death of Christ was an Oblation and Propitiatory Sacrifice, whereby he prevail'd upon God (offended at our Sins) to be reconcil'd unto us, to bestow upon us the means of believing in Christ and obeying his Commands, and at last to confer upon us Everlasting Life.

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Dominion
of Sin. As the Priesthood of Christ has taken away the Guilt of Sin, so likewise is it very effectual for destroying the Dominion thereof ; and this whether we consider it as it has a respect to God the Father, to Jesus Christ, or to our selves, and the happy State wherein we are plac'd by the Death of Jesus Christ. (1.) It is so with respect to God the Father ; because thereby we not only discover his transcendent Love to Mankind, *in not sparing his own Son, but giving him up for us all* ; which Love ought to excite us to love him ; but also his Hatred to Sin, and Love of Justice, in that tho he was merciful and inclin'd to pardon us, yet would not be pleas'd unless Jesus our Priest laid down his Life, and sacrificed his Blood for our sakes. (2.) It is so with respect to Jesus Christ ; for he by suffering Death for us, has shew'd the highest degree of Love towards us, which should excite us to love him, and express our Love by obeying his Commands ; and the Consideration of his dying for our Sins, will beget in us a greater Hatred to all Sin for the time to come. (3.) And lastly, It is so with respect to our selves, and the happy State wherein we are plac'd : For by the shedding of his Blood he has obtain'd for us the Divine Favour and Remission of Sins ; and we are by this means freed from the Slave-

ry of Sin, and call'd into the glorious Liberty of the Sons of God. Nor is the Death and Sacrifice of Christ less prevalent for the promoting of a Holy Life, and making us to persevere therein even to the Death; for if we should revolt, and become again the Servants of Sin, we shall count the Blood of the Covenant an unholy thing¹; and as much as in us lies shall crucify the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame².

The Force and Energy of this Sacrifice is destroy'd by those who maintain that before Jesus Christ was appointed by the Father to be the Mediator, there was an Eternal, Absolute and Irrevocable Decree made by God concerning the Salvation and Damnation of all Men, without any regard had to their Faith or Infidelity. For by this the very Notion of a Sacrifice, or Reconciliation and Propitiation, is overthrown; since neither they who are elected, nor those who are reprobated absolutely, can be reconcil'd to God. As for Reprobates, the Case is plain; since by an Eternal Decree they are so far excluded from the Grace and Favour of God, that he will not so much as require a Sacrifice to be offer'd for them. And then as to the Elect, the matter is as evident; for since they are absolutely elected to Salvation, they are belov'd by God with the highest and immutable Love; and such certainly cannot be said to be reconcil'd to God, for they need it not. True it is, these Men offer at several things in justification of their Doctrine, but so full of Absurdities and Contradictions, that we shall not stand to refute their Pretences; especially since in the next Book we shall have an Opportunity of discussing those matters more thorowly.

III. In the Kingly Office of Christ we took notice of three principal Acts by which he obtains Salvation for us; viz. His sending out the Apostles, and after them a Succession of Ministers, to announce to the People the Terms of his Kingdom: His taking care of the Faithful, whom he places in a State of Salvation, affording them the means both Internal and External, whereby they may attain Eternal Life; and his judg-

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¹ Heb. 10. 29. ² Heb. 6. 6.

ing the World at the last Day. By all these Acts of his Regal Power, he may very justly be stil'd our Saviour. For if *Moses*, who deliver'd the Children of *Israel* out of the *Egyptian* Bondage; if *Othniel*, *Samson*, and the rest of the Judges who freed the same People out of the Hands of their Oppressors, were stil'd Saviours, and Deliverers: then with the highest reason may Jesus Christ be call'd our Saviour and Redeemer, who converts us by his Word, places us in a State of Salvation, preserves us in his Faith and Obedience, and at last by his irresistible Power raises us from the dead, and bestows upon us true and eternal Salvation.

From what has been said it appears, why Remission of Sins and our Salvation is usually ascrib'd to the Death and Blood of Jesus Christ, viz. because in all his Offices; and consequently in the whole Work of Redemption, it has a various Aspect: for it is the Seal of the New Covenant; the Sacrifice and Blood of the Victim slain for Sin; and lastly the Way and Means whereby Christ arriv'd to his Regal Authority.

Upon the whole matter we infer, that on the one hand they are extremely mistaken, who treating of the manner wherein the Lord Jesus is our Saviour, do scarce consider any thing therein but his Office as Priest: and on the other hand they are as much to blame who pass by in silence the Priestly Office, and if not in Words, yet by necessary Consequence, ascribe the whole Work of Redemption to Christ as he is our Prophet and our King. Now by what has been said on the three Offices of Christ, 'tis evident that they are mightily in the wrong, who by attributing the whole to one, do depreciate and render the other Offices of Christ wholly insignificant. Whereas in truth (as we have shewn at large) the Business of Salvation was carry'd on by all the three Offices of Christ, as Prophet, Priest, and King conjunctly; and by this means we have a Remedy in him suitable to the Misery we were involv'd in, and were to be freed from.

C H A P. VIII.

*That Jesus is the Christ, or the Messiah
promised antiently to the Jews.*

ALTHO by what we have already deliver'd of the *All the* Person and Offices of Jesus, it is manifest that he *phetic.* was the Christ, or the *Messiah* promised by God to *filled* the *Jews*; yet for the farther Confirmation of our *Christ* Faith, I will evince that all the Predictions of the Prophets, wherein the Coming of the *Messiah* was foretold, have their Completion in our Jesus.

But here it is requisite before hand to take for granted, the Divine Authority of the Books of the New Testament, and the Truth of the History contain'd in them, which we have already proved¹.

For unless this be presupposed, it would be a very *The T* difficult matter to convince a *Jew* by the Prophecies of *th* only, and to shew him that all things ought to have *Books* happened, just as they are related in the Gospel. The *the A* Reason is, because the Prophecies, a few only except- *Testa* ed, do admit of a twofold Sense, the one Literal, the *Suppo* other Mystical. Now the *Jews* can shew that most of the Prophecies are already fulfilled in the Literal Sense; but it would be difficult to convince them that the Mystical Sense, which relates to the *Messiah*, of which the thing taken according to the Letter was only a Type, is contained in the Words of the Prophets. But 'tis easy to evince the Mystical Sense of such Prophecies from hence; that the Impletion, which happened in the Type, is for the most part more imperfect, than the Promises of God according to the true and proper Signification of the Words do import; therefore a more sublime and perfect Completion ought to be enquir'd after, which is to be met with in the Person of the *Messiah*.

¹ B. 1. Ch. 3. §. 2.

the Properties told of Messia-fulfil'd Jesus ist. Taking it therefore for granted that the Books of the New Testament are true, and contain a genuine Narration of what relates to the Person and Offices of Jesus Christ, we affirm, that all the Properties requir'd to be in the true *Messiah*, are to be found in our Saviour; and therefore the *Jews* are inexcusable, guilty of the highest Incredulity and Obstinacy, and have no grounds for their rejecting and not owning him as the true *Messiah*. In order to prove this, 'tis to be noted that the things foretold of the *Messiah* are of two sorts; some do only shew in the Negative, not that he who has them is the true *Messiah*, but that he who has them not, cannot be such; of which nature are those which relate to some outward Circumstances, as the time and place of his Birth, his Family and Kindred. Others do positively demonstrate, that the Person in whom they are to be met with is the true *Messiah*; of which kind are those Predictions that relate to his Doctrine and Miracles, his Death, Resurrection, Ascension, and at last the Propagation of his Doctrine over the Face of the whole Earth: All which are such Properties, as are compatible to none but the *Messiah* alone. Of these matters we will treat in two distinct Sections, and endeavour to set them in a full and clear Light.

S E C T. I.

Of the Prophecies which relate to the Time and Place of the Birth, and to the Family and Kindred of the Messiah.

We shall begin with the first sort of Proofs, which are the Predictions that refer to some outward Circumstances, such as the Time and Place of the *Messiah*'s Nativity, his Family and his Kindred; and shall evince them to be all fulfilled in our Jesus.

The As to the TIME of his Birth, God had fix'd a certain Period of Time within which the *Messiah* was to come, viz. whilst the *Jewish* Polity and Temple, with their Ceremonial Worship, lasted. So that who-
ne of the *Messiah*'s to come, viz. whilst the *Jewish* Polity and Temple, with their Ceremonial Worship, lasted. So that who-
ning v'd to be ever seriously considers that now the *Jewish* Common-
pled. wealth is destroyed, the Temple of *Jerusalem* level'd
with

with the Ground, and with it the *Levitical* Priesthood and the whole Ceremonial Worship is ceas'd long since, must acknowledg that all these are manifest Signs, that the fix'd Time of the *Messiah's* coming is already elapsed. That God had prefixed this Period of Time, appears from the most evident Predictions of the Prophets.

In the first Place, that the *Messiah* was to come before the Subversion of the *Jewish* Commonwealth, is plain from the Prophecy of *Jacob*, Gen. 49. 10. *The Sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a Law-giver from between his Feet, until Shiloh come; and unto him shall the gathering of the People be.* Now here we may perceive three things to be foretold: (1.) The bestowing the Sceptre on the Tribe of *Judah*, which was fulfilled after the Death of *Solomon*, when the ten Tribes revolted from his Son *Rehoboam*, and the Kingdom of *Judah* was set up. (2.) The coming of *Shiloh*, by which Word according to the unanimous Consent of Interpreters, derive it from what Root you please, is meant the *Messiah*; as is farther evident by what follows, *Unto him shall the gathering of the People be*; for the voluntary Submission and Obedience of the *Gentiles*, by the *Jews* own Confession, is a Genuine Mark of the *Messiah*, according to the Prophecies of *Isaiah* and *Micah*. (3.) Here is the time of his Coming foretold, viz. before the Sceptre should depart from *Judah*, which was exactly fulfilled in our blessed Saviour's Coming at that very prefix'd time. For tho the Regal Power of *Judah* met with some Interruption during the *Babylonish* Captivity; tho first the *Assyrian* Race of the Tribe of *Levi* reign'd, and after them *Herod* a Foreigner was their King: yet when our Saviour first appeared, the *Jewish* Commonwealth still subsisted, they were govern'd by their own Laws; and their Kings, tho of another Tribe or Nation, sway'd the Sceptre of *Judah*, which was not departed from them till the *Romans* had destroy'd their City and Temple, and put an end to the whole *Jewish* Oeconomy.

Again we are expressly inform'd, Hag. 2. 7, 8, 9, 10. and Mal. 3. 1. That the *Messiah* should come before the Destruction of the second Temple; therefore the

1. From
Gen. 49.
10.

2. From
Hag. 2. 7,
Ec. &
Mal. 3. 1.

¹ H. 11. 10. and 49. 6. ² Mic. 7. 12.

Destruction of the Temple, and the ceasing of the *Levitical* Priesthood, is a certain Sign that the *Messiah* is already come. *Haggai* tells us, that the Temple built by *Zorobabel* should be more glorious than *Solomon's*, since into it the Desire of all Nations should come. Now it is well known, that the Glory of the second Temple did not consist in any outward Ornaments and Decorations, since in them it fell vastly short of the Temple built by *Solomon*; but in the internal Ornament and spiritual Gifts, which by the Presence of the *Messiah* should far exceed those of the first House. And here we may take notice of the wonderful contrivance of the Wisdom of God, in that by the coming of the *Messiah*, and by those three Offices of his, as King, Priest, and Prophet, he was willing to put an end to the *Jewish* Government, since in the Person of Jesus Christ as the *Messiah* those three Offices had their full Completion.

From
Dan. 9.
4, 25,
6, 27.
Add to this, in the third place, that the Prophet *Daniel*, Chap. 9. v. 24, 25, 26, 27. has fix'd a certain Point of time to the Advent of the *Messiah*. We shall not at present enquire into the precise beginning or end of those Weeks: 'Tis enough to observe, that by this Place it is evident that the *Messiah* should come before the end of Prophecy and Sacrifices, and before the City and Temple were destroyed, and consequently that *Daniel's* seventy Weeks should be expired first. It is only to be prov'd against the *Jews*, that he, whose Advent and Death are here foretold, was the very *Messiah* whom they expect according to the Prediction of the Prophet: And of this the very Appellation of *Messiah* repeated twice, and once with the addition of *Prince*, might convince them. True it is, that this Epithet is likewise attributed to others in Scripture, as to *Saul*; to *David*; to *Cyrus*; to *Josiah* or *Zedekiah*: But then it has always a manifest relation to some body, of whom mention is made in other Words, or by another Name in the Context. Whereas in this place he is stil'd absolutely, and by way of Eminence, *The Messiah*; and neither in the Words before nor

¹ 1 Sam. 24. 7. and 26. 23. ² Pl. 2. 2. and 89. 39. ³ If.
47. 1. — ⁴ Lament. 4. 20.

after, is there any mention of any other to whom this Appellation can be said to belong.

But the *Jews*, to evade the Force of the Text, object *An Ob-jection ar-* that by *Messiah the Prince* is meant some other Person, *swer'd.* beside the *Messiah* simply so call'd; which is likewise the Opinion of some Christians. *Answ.* They are not agreed among themselves who is *Messiah the Prince*, and who the other *Messiah*; which is a plain Demonstration, that they are uncertain in their Guesses, and cannot fix upon an Explication to satisfy themselves. But the weakness of this their Interpretation, not to insist upon what has been already said, appears from hence; that there is an uninterrupted Connexion in the Words, and the Appellation of *Messiah* is one and the same, which is a sufficient Proof that one and the same Person is here meant.

We might here have clos'd up this Point, since 'tis Mar- sufficiently prov'd against the *Jews*, that the Time of *Isham's* the *Messiah's* Coming was fix'd by *Daniel* to be with- *pinion of* in the Compass of seventy Weeks: But since Sir *John Dan* *Prof.* *Marsham* * has contriv'd a new Explication of this Text, which if allow'd of, the Christians would not have any Defence to make in their Disputes against the *Jews*; we think it worth our while, for the farther establishing the true meaning of that Place, and rendring it an invincible Argument against the *Jews*, to enquire a little into this Author's Interpretation, and to shew how foreign it is to the Prophet's Intention, and how inconsistent with it self.

As the Foundation of his Explication, he presupposes, *Stated.*
 " That the Prayer of *Daniel*, and the Answer of the
 " Angel, were uttered 21 Years, or three of *Daniel's*
 " Weeks, after the beginning of the *Babylonish* Cap-
 " tivity: And this he endeavours to prove from
 " hence, because that Vision happened to *Daniel* after
 " his Praying and Fasting, the length of which the
 " Prophet intimates, when he says, that he mourn'd
 " the days of three Weeks, *i. e.* (according to *Marsham's*
 " Interpretation) he was accustomed to pray and fast
 " from the Desolation of *Jerusalem* to the day of this

* *In his Chronicle.*

1 Chap. 9. 3, 4. 2 Chap. 10. 3.

Y. 2

" Vision,

" Vision, for three whole Weeks of Years, or twenty
 " one Years." Upon this Foundation it is that he
 builds the following Exposition of the Words :
 " And first he makes a distinction betwixt the two
 " Numbers of Weeks, separating the seven former
 " from the sixty two latter, telling us, that the one
 " belongs to the times of *Cyrus*, and the other to those
 " of *Antiochus Epiphanes* : That to the Reign of
 " *Cyrus* seven Weeks or 49 Years were still to come ;
 " for since three Weeks or 21 Years of the *Babylonish*
 " Captivity were elapsed, the Angel tells him that
 " after seven Weeks or 49 Years, the *Jews* should be
 " deliver'd from their Captivity, that he might con-
 " firm the Prophecy of *Jeremiah*, who had foretold
 " that seventy Years Captivity. But that the Angel adds
 " another Prediction, concerning the Desolation and
 " Oppression to be wrought by *Antiochus Epiphanes*,
 " which should happen after sixty three Weeks. "

As to the Foundation of this Exposition, (1.) It is
 not only uncertain, but even the manner of Speech
 us'd by *Daniel* does not allow us to suppose, that by
 the Days of three Weeks, wherein he is said to fast,
 are to be understood Weeks of Years, or 21 Years,
 but only Weeks of Days, as plainly appears by the
 whole Connection of the Text with the Context.
 (2.) But suppose that *Daniel* did mean three Weeks
 of Years, yet nothing can be concluded from thence,
 unless it can be prov'd that both the Visions here men-
 tion'd happened at one and the same time. Now in
 opposition to this, *Daniel* himself informs us, *Chap. 9.*
 that the former Vision was in the first Year of *Darius*
 the *Mede*, and the Vision mention'd *Chap. 10.* was
 in the third Year of *Cyrus* King of the *Persians* ; be-
 tween which two Visions, according to *Marshall's*
 own Calculation, was the Interval of about 49 Years.
 It cannot therefore be infer'd from the Days of *Da-*
niel's Fasting in the time of *Cyrus*, how long he fasted
 in the first Year of *Darius* the *Mede* ; unless that
 Prophet's Words, (In those Days I *Daniel* was mourn-
 ing three full Weeks) be explain'd, so as to mean 49
 Years before those Days wherein I *Daniel* was mourn-
 ing ; which any one may perceive to be very absurd.
 After all, the Words of *Daniel* are so clear in this mat-
 ter,

ter, that we cannot but wonder how any Man should wrest them to another Sense, than is evidently implied in them.

But granting the Foundation to be good; yet *Mar-* *The Expi*
sham's Interpretation is by no means consistent with, *cation it*
but destroys it self. The Angel says, *Seventy Weeks self refu-*
are determin'd upon thy People, and upon thy Holy ted.

City, &c. which seventy Weeks amount to 490 Years.

This Time *Marsham* casts into two Periods; the former is seven Weeks, or 49 Years, which determines at the Reign of *Cyrus*; and the other is sixty two Weeks, the which if we add a Week and a half, amount to 440 Years and a half. Now from *Cyrus* to *Antiochus Epiphanes*, by *Marsham's* own Confession, there were not so many Years past. To evade this he says, That there is the same *Epocha* of both Computations, *viz.* from the Destruction of *Solomon's* Temple; and therefore he does not fix the Beginning of those Weeks at the end of the seven Weeks, but carries them back ten Weeks or seventy Years, *viz.* to the time when *Solomon's* Temple was destroyed. To this we answer,

(1.) Where is the same *Epocha* of both Computations? Before this, he said, that the *Epocha* of the seven Weeks was fix'd at the time when the Angel spoke to *Daniel*, which he would have to be three Weeks or 21 Years after the Destruction of the Temple, little remembring what he had said before; so that he makes and unmakes *Epochas* as he thinks fit and most suitable to his Exposition. (2.) A greater Difficulty is still behind. The Angel says, *seventy Weeks are determin'd upon thy People*; but according to *Marsham's* Calculation they will be only sixty, as will evidently appear to any one who seriously reflects upon what he has advanc'd on these two Periods. But without insisting any longer on this Subject, we shall only observe, That there are several other things in *Sir John Marsham's* Explication, which will not stand the Test of a strict Scrutiny, tho some there are very congruous to this Text, and may very rationally be applied to the things which happen'd in the Time of *Antiochus Epiphanes*.

Upon the whole matter we conclude, that it is very trifling for the *Jews* to assert, That God has put off the Advent of the Messiah longer than he intended, up-

on the account of the Sins of that People: (1.) Because all the Promises of the Coming of the *Messiah* are absolute and unconditional. (2.) In *Daniel's* Prophecy 'tis expressly said, *seventy Weeks are determin'd*, i. e. by a certain and immutable Decree prefix'd for the Advent of the *Messiah*. (3.) What a Contradiction is it to say that the Advent of the *Messiah* was delay'd upon the account of the Sins of the *Jews*, since on the contrary 'tis declar'd that he should come in the most corrupt of Times, in order to reclaim a sinful People unto God? (4.) Let the *Jews* tell us what were their Sins, for which God defer'd the Advent of the *Messiah*. God threatned them indeed to deliver them up to Captivity for their Sins, and upon their Repentance promis'd to deliver and restore them to their Native Country. Seventy Years together were they under the *Babylonish* Captivity, and when that time was expir'd, were deliver'd, and sent home again. But now for 1700 Years and upwards have they been Exiles; dispersed over the Face of the Earth, despis'd and hated by all; nor has God by any Prophet spoken to or comforted them, or given them any Hopes of a Restoration as in former times; but rather shews his Anger and Displeasure towards them.

The *Jews* might indeed have had some Pretence on their side, had no Person appear'd at the Time prefix'd by God, who call'd himself the *Messiah*: But now are they guilty of the highest Infidelity and Obstinacy, since our Lord Jesus appear'd at that very Time, and not only declar'd himself to be the *Messiah*, but prov'd the Truth of it by many and evident Miracles, and none else appear'd at that time to confront or oppose him. From all which laid together we infer, that our Lord Jesus was the true *Messiah* promis'd of old to the *Jews*.

II. Another Evidence of *Jesus's* being the true *Messiah*, is the noted Prophecy of *Micah* concerning the Place of his Birth, Ch. 5. V. 2. *But thou Bethlehem Ephratah, tho thou be little among the Thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me, that is*

to be Ruler in Israel, &c. By which Words 'tis evident that the Place of the *Messiah's* Birth is pointed out to us: For therefore is *Bethlehem*, tho small, prefer'd to the Thousands of *Judah*, because the Ruler in *Israel* should come forth of it.

To this the *Jews* object, That *Bethlehem* is reckon'd among the Thousands or Princes of *Judah*, because out of it *David* sprang, from whose Loins the *Messiah* was to come. *Ans.* Who does not perceive that this is a downright wresting of the Prophet's Words, that they might have some Cloak to cover their Infidelity? For they not only reject the Interpretation of their Fathers, who at our Saviour's Birth look'd upon this Passage of *Micah* to denote the Place of Christ's Nativity¹, but put such a sense upon it, as the Words of the Prophet will not allow of; for according to them it should have been said, not, *out of thee shall come forth*, but, *out of thee is come forth he who was the Ruler in Israel*. *Objectio answer?*

Again they object, that these Words refer to *Zorobabel*, or some other, who was the Deliverer of the People out of Captivity. *Ans.* We readily grant the *Jews* that in the first and more imperfect Sense the Words may, and probably did refer to *Zorobabel*; but then this is all that can be pretended. For properly speaking, a future Nativity at *Bethlehem* is here foretold, and that of an eminent Ruler, upon the account of whom *Bethlehem* should be reckon'd among the Rulers of *Judah*. But since this is said of *Bethlehem*, even after *David*, the most eminent of the Kings of *Israel*, was sprung from thence, it is manifest that a Ruler more excellent than *David* is here denoted. Now neither of these things agree with *Zorobabel*: For he was not born at *Bethlehem*, and therefore cannot be said to come forth of it; and he was much inferior to *David* in Dignity. It is therefore evident, that tho we grant some other Person may in the Literal and Imperfect Sense be here intended, yet in the Mystical and Compleat Sense the Birth-place of the *Messiah* is denoted hereby. Now our Saviour Jesus Christ was born at *Bethlehem*, according to this Prophecy of *Micah*;

¹ Mat. 2. 5, 6.

and by the special Direction of Divine Providence, there came out a Decree of *Augustus Caesar* that all the World should be tax'd; which occasioned the Mother of *Jesus* who liv'd at *Nazareth*, and little dreamed of her Lying in at *Bethlehem*, to go to that City just upon her being ready to be brought to bed, that there she might bring forth her Son *Jesus*, according to the Prophecy of *Micah*.

He was
the Li-
ge of
vid.

III. As to the Family of the *Messiah*, it is foretold that he should be of the Lineage of *David*, 2 Sam. 7. 12, 13, 14. *And when thy Days be fulfilled, and thou shalt sleep with thy Fathers, I will set up thy Seed after thee, which shall proceed out of thy Bowels, and I will establish his Kingdom; he shall build an House for my Name, and I will establish the Throne of his Kingdom for ever, &c.* Now tho these Words in their Primary and Literal Meaning may be refer'd to *Solomon*, yet in the Myltical Sense they can only be applied to the *Messiah*, since of him alone it can be said that the Throne of his Kingdom is establish'd for ever. Accordingly by the Genealogy of *Jesus* given us by St. *Matthew*¹, and St. *Luke*², it appears that he was both by the Father and Mother's side descended from the Stock and Lineage of *David*. True indeed it is that the Family of *David* was, when our Saviour appear'd, in a very low and mean Condition, which proved a Scandal to the *Jews*, saying of *Jesus*, *Is not this the Carpenter's Son?* But this was agreeable to the Prophecy of *Isaiah*³, who foretold there should come forth a Rod out of the Stem of *Jesse*, and a Branch shall grow out of its Roots, [thereby intimating that the House of *David* was brought very low, even to its Roots] and the Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him, &c.

s Mo-
Vir-
oved
Isa.
IV. The Mother of the *Messiah* was to be a Virgin, according to *Isa.* 7. 14. *Behold a Virgin shall conceive, and bear a Son, and they shall call his Name Immanuel.* It must be own'd that in the Primary and Literal Sense this Prophecy was fulfilled in the Days of *Isaiah*, when a Virgin pointed at by the Prophet, was afterwards

¹ Mat. 1. ² Luke 3. ³ Is. 11. 1, 2, &c.

married and had a Son, which God was pleas'd to give as a Sign of the *Jews* being deliver'd from the Hands of the Kings of *Syria* and *Israel*. And very probably *Isaiah* himself (as some Expositors understand it) married this Virgin here mention'd. But after all, those Words are so conceiv'd, that this Sense of them is only Imperfect and Typical, and some other more Noble and Sublime Meaning is contain'd in them, which is only fulfilled in the *Messiah*. And this will appear to any who seriously considers the following Particulars: (1.) She who was to bring forth a Son is expressly call'd a *Virgin*, עַלְמָה, by which Word, according to its original Import, is meant a Maiden whose Virginity has been untouch'd. (2.) The Birth of this Child is call'd a *Sign*, whereby God thought fit to convince *Abaz* of his Incredulity: But this could not have been such, if only a Maid married to a Man had brought forth a Child, for that is common; it must therefore be understood of a Child born of an immaculate Virgin. (3.) The Name of the Child was to be *Immanuel*, that is, one who should prevail upon God to favour and assist us; now this cannot be applied to that Child, and is only applicable to the *Messiah*, who may in a more proper and exalted Sense be stiled *Immanuel*, *God with us*. The Virgin then in the Time of *Isaiah* was only the Type of the blessed Virgin; and her Child which she had after Marriage, a Type of Jesus Christ; and the Deliverance of which that Child was a Sign, a Type of the Spiritual Deliverance wrought by our Saviour, in rendring God reconcilable to sinful Mankind. Nor do we question but that this Birth of our Saviour of a pure Virgin, is a manifest Token of his being the true *Messiah*; since it is the greatest and most illustrious Miracle, by which even at his very Conception, and on his Birth, he was separated from other Men, and consecrated to his Office by God the Father.

S E C T. II.

Of the Positive Proofs of Jesus's being the true Messiah; viz. such Prophecies as relate to his Doctrine, Miracles, Death, Resurrection, Ascension, and Propagating his Doctrine over the Face of the Earth.

In this Section we are to take into Consideration such Proofs, as more immediately relate to the Office of the *Messiah*, and declare him to be truly such, since they are not to be met with in any other Person. We have already taken notice of three Offices, viz. the Prophetical, Priestly and Kingly, which are peculiar to Christ alone; and now we shall evince that these three Offices with the several Acts of them were foretold by the Prophets, and prove that *Jesus* is the very Christ.

The Messiah was to be a Prophet, as to be a Prophet, prom'd from Deut. 18. 15, 18. I. That the *Messiah* was to be a PROPHE T, is foretold by God by the Mouth of *Moses*, Deut. 18. 15, 18. *I will raise them up a Prophet from among their Brethren, like unto thee, and will put my Words in his Mouth, &c.* To this the *Jews* object, that here is no mention made of the *Messiah*; that God by these Words only promis'd that he would not leave his People without Prophets, but would send them sometimes one, sometimes another to put them in mind of their Duty. *Ans.* 'Tis to be own'd that in the Primary and Literal Sense the Words may bear such a Construction; but it is easy to shew that this is not the full Import of them, but that in a Mystical Sense this Prophecy ought to be applied, as it is justly by the Apostles', to our Saviour. For whoever minds the Words, will perceive that God promises the Children of *Israel* to send them at such a prefix'd Time, a Prophet like unto *Moses*; tho in the mean time he would send unto them several other Prophets to whom they should hearken. And this appears, (1.) Because

God speaking of one, not of many, says, *A Prophet will I raise*, &c. If an *Enallage* of Number be suppos'd, wherein the Singular is put for the Plural, then I add, (2.) That this cannot be allow'd of here, because 'tis said, *I will raise a Prophet*, which doubtless does more properly denote the raising of one eminent Prophet at some certain time, than the sending of several Prophets, whom God would have to be hearkened to, whenever he should send them. (3.) It is expressly added, *I will raise up a Prophet like unto thee*: Now from the time of *Moses* to the Coming of Christ, no Prophet arose like unto him, for he was a Law-giver; whilst the Prophets who succeeded him, down to *Malachi* the last of them, were only Expounders of his Law, exhorted the People to the Observation of it, and sharply reprov'd the Transgressors of it. In this Text therefore a Prophet is promised of the same Authority with *Moses*, i. e. not an Expounder of the Law, but a Legislator as *Moses* was; and not only so, but one also who should enact a more perfect Law, and consequently be a greater Prophet than *Moses*.

Now the Excellency of the *Messiah's* Law above that of *Moses*, consists in these three things. (1.) That he should announce or declare to Men the most perfect Will of God¹. (2.) That he should announce it after the most perfect manner². (3.) That he should preach such a Doctrine, as should extend it self to all Men over the Face of the whole Earth³. All which things cannot be applied to any other Person than the *Messiah*.

That the *Messiah* was to be famous in working of Miracles, tho it is no where expressly foretold, yet may very fairly be infer'd from the abovemention'd Text, viz. *Deut. 18.* for else he would have been much inferior to *Moses*, who was so noted for his Miracles. To this purpose is usually alliedg'd, *Is. 35. 5, 6, &c. Then the Eyes of the Blind shall be opened, and the Ears of the Deaf shall be unstopped: Then shall the lame Man leap as an Hart, and the Tongue of the Dumb sing; for in the Wilderness shall Waters break out, and Streams*

That he was to enact a most perfect Law th
Moses.

Famous Miracle

¹ *Is. 11. 2. & 42. 1. & 61. 1, 2, 3.*

² *Is. 42. 2, 3, 4.*

³ *Is. 42. 2, 3, 4. & 49. 6.*

in the Desert, &c. Which Words may indeed be explain'd in another Sense, and be taken figuratively; yet nothing hinders but that they may be applied to the Point in hand. However there is no need of any Prophecies concerning the Miracles to be perform'd by the Messiah, since These alone are a sufficient Evidence of his Divine Mission; and that our Saviour did work real Miracles, is too notorious to be denied by any who are acquainted with the History of his Life,

He was be a Priest, ou'd from C. 110.4. II. That the Messiah was to be a P R I E S T, is foretold Psal. 110. 4. *Thou art a Priest for ever after the Order of Melchisedec.* By which Words is intimated, that he should at once be a Priest and a King, as *Melchisedec* was, of whom *Moses* testifies, That he was King of Salem, and the Priest of the most high God.

jections answered. Now to this the *Jews* object: First, That this Psalm was not pen'd by *David* in Honour of the Messiah, but by some other Person in Honour of *David*, and therefore has no relation to the Messiah. Secondly, That the Word כֹּהֵן is not to be translated *Priest*, but *Prince*, in which Sense it is taken in several Places of Scripture.

To the first of these Objections I reply, (1.) That the very Title of the Psalm evinces, that it was a Psalm of *David*. 2. That the Elders of the *Jews* did antiently acknowledg it to be such, else they might easily have solv'd our Saviour's Question (*How does David call the Messiah Lord, when he was his Son?*) by answering, that those Words were not spoken by *David* of the Messiah, but by some one of that King's Subjects of *David* himself; and yet we read that *they could not answer him a Word*. It is therefore a modern Fiction of the *Jews*, invented in opposition to the Christian Religion, because they find themselves too much press'd by the Force of this Psalm. But, (3.) supposing we should grant to the *Jews* what they contend for, the most they could make of it would be, that the Psalm according to the literal and imperfect Sense relates to *David*, as the Type of the Messiah:

¹ Gen. 14. 18. ² Gen. 41. 45. Exod. 2. 16. and 3. 1. and particularly 2 Sam. 8. 18. ³ Mat. 22. 42, 43, &c.

whereas there are such noble things contain'd therein, as cannot in any Propriety of Speech be applied to *David*, but have only their Completion in the Person of the Messiah.

To the second Objection I answer, 'Tis true the Word כהן does sometimes signify *Prince*, but more commonly *Priest*; and it cannot here be taken in the former Sense, since he of whom the Words are spoken is said to be כהן, after the Order of *Melchisedec*. Now the Original Word, when applied to *Melchisedec*, does necessarily signify *Priest*, for he is called *the King of Salem*, &c. כהן, i. e. *The Priest of the most High God*; nay the very Act of Blessing which he perform'd argues him to be such'. But if we should render that Word *King* or *Prince*, here would be an apparent Tautology.

But without insisting any farther on this matter, ^{That he died for the Sins of Men, prov'd from Il. 53.} we proceed to shew that the Death and Sacrifice of Christ, with all its cruel and ignominious Circumstances, was foretold by the Prophets: And this is the more necessary, because the accursed Death of Christ was a stumbling Block, and a Rock of Offence to the *Jews*. Very remarkable to this purpose is the Prophecy of *Isaiah*, Chap. 53. wherein it is foretold of the Messiah, not only that he should have no Form nor Comeliness, that he should be despised and rejected of Men, a Man of Sorrows and acquainted with Grief, &c. but also that he should suffer all these things as an Expiatory Sacrifice for our Sins: That he should bear our Grievs and carry our Sorrows, be wounded for our Transgressions, &c. that the Lord should lay on him the Iniquity of us all, that he should make his Soul an Offering for Sin, with the like. True it is, some understand this Prophecy in a primary Sense to have some Relation to the Oppressions which the *Jews* suffered in the *Babylonish* Captivity, or else that some extraordinary Person, such as *Jeremiah*, is represented here as suffering. But granting this, yet it was only the Type of Christ's Sufferings; for whoever seriously attends to the whole

Description of the Sufferings here mentioned, and to the Character here given of the Person who suffered, viz. *That he had done no Violence, neither was any Deceit found in his Mouth*; must acknowledg that it could not properly be applied either to the People of *Israel*, or to *Jeremiah*, but has its ultimate and most perfect Completion in the Person of the *Messiah*.

nd from Besides, there are other Prophecies to the same purpose, especially in the *Psalms*, particularly *Psal. 22.* and *69.* wherein the various Circumstances of Christ's Sufferings are foretold under the Type of *David*, which were not fulfilled in him, but only in an imperfect and figurative Sense; as *that his Hands and Feet should be pierced, that he should drink Vinegar and Gall, with the like*; all which had their full and perfect Completion in Christ.

. That he III. From what has been said, 'tis plain, that the things which the Prophets foretold concerning the Kingdom of the *Messiah*, are to be understood not of an Earthly, but of a Heavenly and Spiritual Kingdom, such as we have already evinc'd our Lord Jesus Christ has set up. That the *Messiah* was to be a KING, we need not prove, since the *Jews* themselves freely own it; the whole Dispute lies concerning the Nature of his Kingdom. We have elsewhere prov'd, that the King foretold by the Prophets, was to be a Spiritual and Heavenly one; and among others the greatest Argument is, that he is represented as one who should be rejected, afflicted, and put to Death by his People; which cannot be reconciled with an Earthly Kingdom. Hence it is, that the *Jews* have feign'd two Christs; one the Son of *Judah*, a Glorious and Triumphant Prince; the other the Son of *Joseph*, miserable, unfortunate, and who was to be killed. But these things are easily adjust'd, if we own the Kingdom of Christ to be Spiritual, and look upon his Death as the way by which he entred into it. For the Prophets foretold that his Death and Passion should precede his Glory, and therefore their Predictions of the one are as evident as those of the other: What therefore happen'd to our Saviour after his Death, viz. his Resurrection, Ascension, and Kingdom, or Session at the Right Hand of God the Father, are plain Demonstrations, that he

was the *Messiah* foretold by the Prophets.

That the *Messiah* was to rise again from the Dead, *That he* we are taught by those Prophecies, which speak of *was to rise* the Glory, Extent, and Eternity of his Kingdom¹; *again from* for since the Prophets foretel that he should suffer *the Dead* many things, be put to Death, and then to arrive to his Kingdom of Glory, it necessarily follows that he was to rise again from the Dead: But this is more expressly foretold, *Psal.* 16. 10. where it is said, *Thou wilt not leave my Soul in Hell, neither wilt thou suffer thine holy one to see Corruption.* Now St. Peter² and St. Paul³ have proved against the *Jews*, that this was not fulfilled in the Person of *David*, according to the genuine and proper Signification of the Words, and the ultimate Intention of God. It follows then, that this Prediction must be applied to the Resurrection of one that was dead, and who rose again before his Flesh saw Corruption; which was fulfilled in our Jesus the true *Messiah*, whom God raised from the Dead even on the third Day, before his Flesh had seen Corruption.

Next to the Resurrection of Jesus Christ, followed *That he* his Ascension into Heaven, and Session at the Right *was to a* Hand of God the Father. As to the Ascension, it is *ascend into* foretold, *Psal.* 68. 18. *Thou hast ascended on high, thou* *Heaven.* *hast led Captivity Captive, thou hast received Gifts for Men*: which Prophecy is applied by the Apostle to the Ascension of Jesus Christ⁴. Add to this *Psal.* 110. 1. *The Lord said to my Lord, Sit thou at my Right Hand, until I make thine Enemies thy Footstool.* Which Words, as we have already evinc'd, relate to the *Messiah* and his Heavenly Dominion, and are a manifest Prediction of his Ascension into Heaven; for he could not have sat at the Right Hand of God, nor under him have obtain'd the Sovereignty over all things, had he not first ascended into Heaven, and there been placed in the Throne of God. And thus it is that St. Peter excellently argues⁵, *For David is not ascended into the Heavens, but he saith himself, The*

¹ 2 Sam. 7. 12, 13, 14, 15. 1 Kings 8. 25. Ps. 89. 29, 30, 36, &c. and Ps. 132. 11. ² Acts 2. 25, &c. ³ Acts 13. 36, 37. ⁴ Eph. 4. 8. ⁵ Acts 2. 34.

Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my Right Hand, &c. As if he should have said, Unless Christ had ascended into Heaven, he could not have sat down at the Right Hand of God.

Lastly, 'tis foretold by the Prophets, that all Nations should by the *Messiah* be called to the Communion of the one true God, whom the *Israelites* worshipped. The *Jews* indeed allow of this, but then suppose that the *Gentiles* were to be admitted into Communion upon no other Terms, than that of being their Servants, as were the *Gibeonites* of old, and of embracing the Law of *Moses* with all its Ceremonies. But upon a more close View of the Prophecies, we shall find that there is no distinction of People made, but all were to be admitted with an equal Privilege; nay that the *Gentiles* who believed should be taken into the place of the unbelieving *Jews*, and prefer'd before them. This appears from abundance of Prophecies, too many to be insisted on in this Place, only we refer you to the several Texts to consult them¹.

Now whatever the Prophets foretold of this matter, was fulfilled in our Saviour: For upon his Ascension into Heaven he sent forth his Apostles, and gave them Commandment to preach the Gospel unto all Nations². Which in the primary Sense did indeed relate to the *Israelites* dispersed among all People over the whole Earth; but yet in a secondary and fuller Sense, all Nations were comprehended. This the Apostles did not at first apprehend, and therefore our Lord in a Vision informed *Peter*, that the *Gentiles* were no longer to be accounted Common or Unclean³; and sent his Apostles to all Nations, which Office they faithfully discharged, as appears from several Places of Scripture⁴. Nay, the very matter of Fact proves it self; for we see that the Gospel is spread almost throughout the whole World, and that the true and only God of

¹ *Is.* 2. 2, 3. *Is.* 11. 10, 11. and 19. 18, 19. and 49. 6. and 69. 3. and 65. 1, 2. and 66. 21. *Mic.* 4. 1, 2, &c. *Hos.* 1. 10, 11; 12. *Amos* 9. 11. *Zach.* 2. 11. *Mal.* 1. 11. ² *Mat.* 28. 18. *Mar.* 16. 15, 16. ³ *Acts* 10. ⁴ *Rom.* 10. 18. *Coloss.* 1. 23. and 3. 11.

Israel is worship'd and ador'd by all. Not that we pretend that all these things had their entire Completion, as soon as the Gospel began to be preach'd, but it was propagated and spread among the *Gentiles* by degrees. For the reclaiming the *Jews*, begun by the preaching of the Apostles (sent more immediately and especially to them) has by reason of their obstinate Incredulity met in part and for some time with some Interruption; but it shall be renew'd again, and have its full Completion, when the Fulness of the *Gentiles* shall come in: That so, as the Apostle speaks', *all Israel together with the Gentiles may be sav'd through Faith in Jesus Christ*. The Law of *Moses* could not for sixteen hundred Years together propagate the Worship of the true God among other Nations, which was confin'd within the narrow Bounds of *Judea*; but the preaching of Jesus within a few Years fill'd the whole World with the Knowledg of the true God: Which doubtless is no small Argument of the Divinity of Christ's Doctrine.

C H A P. IX.

An Answer to the Principal Objections of the Jews.

BEFORE we conclude this Book, we shall in this last Chapter consider and refute some of the main Objections brought by the *Jews* against Jesus's being the true *Messiah*, and against the Truth of the Christian Religion.

I. In the first place they object, " That we do not
 " as yet see that profound Peace predicted by *Isaiah*²
 " and others, which was to happen in the times of the
 " *Messiah*; but on the contrary, among Christians,
 " both in Church and State, are Enmities, intestine
 1. Objec- tion,
That the Peace pre- dicted is not as yet seen;

¹ Rom. 11. 25, 26, 27. ² Is. 11. 6, 7, &c.

“ Quarrels and Divisions: That Christ himself says, “ that *he came not to send Peace upon the Earth but a “ Sword*”, &c. and that there are Schisms in the “ Church of Christ, and bloody Wars kept up a- “ mong Christians.” *Ans.* To the several Branches of this Objection, we will give a particular Reply. (1.) As to the Prophecies which relate to the peaceable Times of the *Messiah*, they predict not what should exactly happen, but only what should be the Genius of the Doctrine of the *Messiah*; viz. to inspire Men with Gentleness and Meekness of Mind. That this was the Genius of the Christian Religion, is very manifest from a bare Inspection into its Precepts, which breathe forth nothing but Peace and Universal Charity towards all, even our greatest Enemies. (2.) As to what our Saviour says of *not sending Peace upon Earth, but a Sword*; this does not denote the End and Design, but the Effect and Event of his Doctrine, which by the Wickedness of Men should happen contrary to the Genius thereof. For it can hardly be imagin’d that Jesus who is stil’d the *Prince of Peace*, who came into the World on purpose to reconcile Men first with God, and then with one another, would publish such a Doctrine as should designedly put Men at variance, tho by its Purity it might raise many Opposers against it, and the sincere Professors thereof. So that all this is no more than an accidental Effect, occasion’d by the Malice of the Devil, and the vicious Inclinations of wicked Men. (3.) As to the Divisions and Schisms said to be in the Church of Christ, and the Wars carry’d on among Christians: To this we reply, That Wars are waged by those who are no genuine Disciples of Christ, and contrary to the Genius of the Gospel (I mean such Wars as are unnecessary, and carry’d on with a Design of promoting Human Grandeur and Glory.) So likewise as to the Schisms and Divisions which have been or are still in the Christian Church, they were either only bare Diversities of Opinions without any Breach of Affection, or dividing the Church into Parties, which were not inconsistent with the Peace

of the Church; or are Schisms and rending the Church into Parties: but these are introduc'd by false Christians, and tho they may give just occasion of Offence to the *Jews*, yet ought they not to be imputed to the Doctrine of our great Master, which inspires into us Unity and Concord; but to those who are degenerated from it.

II. They object, "That the *Messiah* was to bring back the Children of *Israel* to the promis'd Land: Which is so far from being done by our Jesus, that a little after his Appearance the very Tribe of *Judah*, which had return'd from Captivity, were cut off together with their Temple, all of them carry'd away Captive, and ever since miserably dispers'd over the Face of the Earth." *Ans.* (1.) As to the Places and Prophecies refer'd to by the *Jews*, if we mind the Primary and Literal Sense of them, they have a regard most of them to their Deliverance from the *Babylonish* Captivity. (2.) Supposing they do relate to the Times of the *Messiah*, they may be understood conditionally, if the People should receive the *Messiah* sent to them by God: Therefore this Promise may still be fulfilled, provided they perform the Condition thereof. (3.) These Promises are not to be understood literally of their being brought to the Land of *Canaan*; but mystically of Heaven, of which *Canaan* was only a Type, by which God was pleas'd to shadow out to this carnal People Spiritual and Celestial Blessings.

III. They say, "That in the Times of the *Messiah* it is foretold, that all Idols should be taken out of the Earth, and Idolatry be destroy'd; but that this is not fulfill'd under Jesus Christ, since in many Parts of the World Idolatry still prevails, and the worst sort of it is practis'd even in the Christian Church." *Ans.* (1.) Such Prophecies as they mention do not intimate, that as soon as the *Messiah* appear'd the Things foretold should come to pass, but that by degrees they should be fulfill'd, and a Beginning thereof be made at the very first Appearance

2.Obj. That *Israel* is not brought back to the Land of *Canaan*,

Answer'd.

3.Obj. That *Idolatry* is not abolish'd,

Answer'd.

¹ Isa. 11. 11, 12, 13. Ezek. 37. 25, 26, 27, 28. Zech. 2. 10, 11. ² Isa. 2. 17, 18, 20. Zeph. 2. 11. Zech. 13. 2.

of the Messiah. Now 'tis certain that upon the first Promulgation of the Gospel, Idolatry began to be rooted out, and by degrees it with the false Oracles ceased more and more in several Places of the World where the Gospel was embrac'd. (2.) There is no defect of the Gospel, if Idolatry does at present prevail in some Countries; but 'tis either because Christ has not been reveal'd, nor his Gospel preach'd to them; or else because it has been done by such Missionaries, as have made Gain their Godliness, and regarded their own Profit more than the Salvation of Souls, and by the Wickedness of their Lives have done more Prejudice than Advantage to the Christian Profession. (3.) As to what is said of the Idolatry which is practis'd in the Christian Church, to this we reply in the following Particulars: First, 'tis certain the foremention'd Prophecies properly predict the Extirpation of Heathenish Idolatry; and that sort of it practis'd in the Church of *Rome*, is very different from it. Secondly, The Primitive Christians abhor'd all Idolatry; and the Church of *Rome*, which has introduced it again, has departed from the Faith and the Examples of its Ancestors, and shews it self to be moved rather by the Spirit of Antichrist than of Christ: For which reason so many thousands of Christians have broke Communion with her, and suffer the severest of Punishments, rather than be Partakers with her in her Idolatry. Thirdly, Christ by his Apostles' foretold that there should be such an Apostacy in his Church: As therefore the Extirpation of Heathenish Idolatry was a Sign to the *Jews* of the true Messiah; so this Defection from the Christian Faith and Religion foretold by Christ, ought to be a Sign to them that our Jesus is the true Messiah.

4. Obj. That
Jesus de-
stroy'd the
Law of
Moses,
Answered.

IV. They object, "That Jesus abolished the Law of *Moses*, which was an Eternal Law, and given by God to last for ever, therefore he could not be the true Messiah. *Ansiv.* 'Tis plain by all the Prophecies which predicted the Coming of the Messiah, that he was to be a Legislator like unto *Moses*, and that he was to introduce into the World a more perfect Law than

that of *Moses*; however it does not from thence follow that he abolish'd the *Mosaical* Law, on the contrary he assures us¹, that *he came not to destroy the Law or the Prophets, but to fulfil them.* As to the Moral Law, our Lord was so far from abrogating it, that by his particular Explications of the several Precepts of it he rescued it from the false Glosses of the *Scribes* and *Pharisees*. And as to the Ceremonial, tho by his Coming the Type was to vanish away upon the Appearance of the Antitype, yet 'tis certain he observed those Ceremonies himself, and commanded his Disciples to observe them too². As to what is said, that St. *Paul* was utterly against the Law of Ceremonies, and vehemently argued for the Christian Liberty; the whole he contended for was, that the *Gentiles* were not obliged to the Observance of them; tho himself with other of the converted *Jews* were punctual Observers thereof.

V. Lastly they object, "That *Elias* was to pre-^{5. Obj.}
cede the Coming of the Messiah³", but *Elias*, say *That Eli*
"they, is not yet come." *Answ.* By *Elias* we are ^{as is not}
to understand, not *Elias* himself, but one like to him. ^{yet come,}
And in this sense we say, that *Elias* is already come; ^{Answer'd.}
that he was *John the Baptist*, the Forerunner of *Jesus*,
who came in the Spirit and Power of *Elias*⁴; and by
his Austerity of Life, flagrant Zeal, and Boldness of
Speech, as exactly represented the Person of *Elias*, as
if he had appear'd again unto the People. This our
Saviour fully explains to his doubting and inquisitive
Disciples⁵. Therefore *Elias* is already come, but the
Jews would not receive him any more than they did
the promis'd Messiah.

¹ Mat. 5. 17. ² Mat. 23. 1. ³ Mal. 4. 4, 5. ⁴ Luke
1. 17. ⁵ Mat. 11. 14. & 17. 12, 13.

B O O K IV.

Of DIVINE PREDESTINATION.

C H A P. I.

Of the Predestination of Men both to Salvation and Damnation.

two things
be con-
sider'd in
the New
Covenant,

IN the foregoing Book we treated at large of the Work of Redemption, and the Method whereby our Salvation was purchas'd by Jesus Christ : It now follows that we should enquire how God makes Men partakers of this Salvation according to the Terms of the New-Covenant, wherein these two things are considerable ; First, What God on his part has decreed to do by his Son Jesus Christ, in order to render us partakers of Eternal Salvation : And then what he would have us do by the Assistance of his Grace, if we would actually attain to this Salvation. God therefore has made two Decrees, by the Consideration of which he would stir us up to worship him, and endeavour after our Everlasting Happiness. The former is, a Decree of Predestination to Salvation, commonly call'd, Election to Glory ; which contains the Method whereby God has decreed to bestow Eternal Salvation upon Men. The other is the Decree of Vocation to Faith, or of Election to Grace ; which contains the manner of the Divine Calling, and of his Heavenly Grace for the due Performance of Faith in, and Obedience to Christ Jesus according to the Will of God, clearly reveal'd to us in the Gospel. We therefore in this PART propose to consider these two things : (I.)

The

The Nature and Condition of Divine Predestination; and, (2.) The Vocation whereby God calls Men to Salvation by Jesus Christ and his Gospel.

As to the Word *P R E D E S T I N A T I O N*, *Predesti-* we shall not at present insist upon the Sense of it in *nation* several Places of Holy Writ, since we shall have occasion *defin'd.* to consider it more largely hereafter; nor shall we confine our selves to the Notions of the Fathers about it, who look'd upon it only as Predestination to Salvation: But we shall give you the Definition of it according to the modern, and (at present) most general Acceptation of that Word, which runs thus: "*The Predestination of God is that Decree, whereby before all Worlds he decreed that they who believ'd in his Son Jesus Christ should be elected, adopted as Sons, justify'd, and upon their Perseverance in Faith should be glorify'd; and on the contrary, That the Unbelievers and Obstinate should be reprobated, blinded, harden'd, and if they continu'd impenitent should be damn'd for ever.*"

From hence 'tis plain that the Decree of Predestina- *The se* tion relates both to those who shall be sav'd, and those *ral Pa* who shall be damn'd; the one call'd the Decree of *of this* Election, the other of Reprobation. But to give a *Defini* farther Explication of our Definition of Divine Pre- *explai* destination: (1.) It is a Decree, we said; made before all Worlds; and according to this our Lord says to those on his right Hand, '*Come ye blessed of my Father, inherit the Kingdom prepar'd for you from the Foundation of the World:* Namely by virtue of that Decree whereby he had determin'd to bestow Salvation on the Believers and Obedient; to which Decree is annex'd the Design of bringing all the Faithful in time to Salvation. Therefore by virtue of this Decree all who believe in time, that is, during the Continuance of this World, may be said to be predestinated to Salvation before the Foundation of the World. (2.) The Foundation of this Decree is Jesus Christ, in whom we are chosen: Because God in his Predestination looks upon Men either as Believers or Unbelievers in Christ Jesus; so

that as no Spiritual Blessing is confer'd upon any but for the sake of Christ, and none is condemn'd but because he is an Infidel; so likewise Salvation or Damnation is destin'd to no Man, but either as he believes, or does not believe in Jesus Christ. (3.) The Objects of Predestination are either Things or Persons. The things with respect to Election are Spiritual Blessings in this Life, such as Adoption, Justification, being seal'd by the Spirit, and in the next World Eternal Life: With respect to Reprobation, they are Divine Punishments even in this Life, such as Blindness, Hardness of Heart, &c. and at last Death Eternal. The Persons, with respect to Election, are those who believe and persevere in their Faith: With respect to Reprobation, the Infidels and Impenitent'. (4.) The impulsive or moving Cause of this Election was in God alone, being according to his own Good-Pleasure; which appears from the following Particulars: First, in that God decreed Salvation to Men, whilst he was Debtor to no Man. Secondly, in that he decreed to bestow it upon Sinners', who had deserv'd the contrary, which was certainly a voluntary and gratuitous Act. Thirdly, in that he has appointed Faith as a Means of attaining Salvation; for he might by his Absolute Will and Pleasure have requir'd Works'. Fourthly, in that he made choice of such a Method of Salvation, as was more suitable to the Poor and Humble, than to those who were puff'd up with their Riches, Wisdom and Learning'. (5.) The End of Predestination both to Election and Reprobation, was the Demonstration of God's Glory'.

ctions
wer'd.

Having thus explain'd the Definition we have given of Predestination, we shall now take notice of, and make a Reply to some Objections rais'd against what we have said on this Subject.

In the first place 'tis objected, that the Predestination we have defin'd, is not that of Persons, but of Faith; since Faith is thereby predestinated as a Con-

' Mar. 16. 16. John 3. 16, 36. & 6. 40. ' 2 Tim. 1. 9, 10.
 ' Rom. 9. 16. & 11. 5. ' Mat. 11. 25, 26. 1 Cor. 1. 26, &c.
 ' Rom. 11. 36. Eph. 1. 5, 6. Exod. 9. 16.

dition of Salvation. *Answ.* He who elected Faith as a Condition to be perform'd by Men if they would attain Eternal Life, has truly elected Men under that Condition, and in his Decree has an immediate regard to Persons. Therefore these two things, *viz.* the Person and his Qualification, are never to be separated, but are always to be join'd together.

Again they object, that the general Decree is no Decree, but only a LAW: And that therefore some particular Decree ought to precede it with relation to the saving and damning of Men. *Answ.* (1.) Such a particular Decree is inconsistent with this general Decree. For he who before had decreed by his Absolute Will and Pleasure to elect such and such Men to Salvation, and to appoint the rest to Destruction, can never be said to decree afterwards in general that Men should be sav'd provided they believ'd, or be damn'd for their Unbelief. (2.) A Law and this general Decree are not so far dissonant, but that they may be taken for one and the same thing. For he who appoints a Reward to those who obey, and a Punishment to those who disobey his Law, may very well be said to decree the Reward to the one, and the Punishment to the other; and this ought more especially to be said of God, who has decreed to have his Law put in execution. (3.) It may with reason be affirm'd that every one in particular who believes, was elected and predestinated to Eternal Life, even before the Foundation of the World: For since the general Decree was made before the World began, and the particular Application of it is made afterwards when Men believe; even particular Men may be said (by virtue of that general Decree wherein the particular ones are included) to be predestinated before the World began.

And here again it may be objected, "That hence it follows that the Salvation and Damnation of particular Men was already fix'd and establish'd before the Beginning of the World; which seems not to be consistent with every Man's Freedom and Liberty, either of attaining Salvation by the Assistance of the Divine Grace, or of incurring the Guilt of Damnation by a wilful Disobedience." *Answ.* These two things are not inconsistent: Because the Divine Prescience not only

ly presupposes that Salvation may be obtain'd by Faith and Obedience, and Men be damn'd for their Infidelity and Impenitence; but also, since Salvation may be attain'd, it presupposes that it may be acquir'd or not acquir'd by our own Virtue or Vice. For the Divine Prescience not only presupposes a thing future, but even the very manner also wherein it shall come to pass. So that this Decree is subordinate to the former General Decree and deduc'd from it, and therefore may be very consistent with it.

om. 11. Lastly they may object, That this Doctrine of Pre-
destination as explain'd by Us, contains no Mystery
in it, but is clear and comprehensible: whereas St. Paul
calls Predestination an unsearchable Mystery; Rom.
11. 33, 34. *O the Depth of the Riches both of the Wis-
dom and Knowledg of God! How unsearchable are his
Judgments, and his Ways past finding out! For who
hath known the Mind of the Lord, or who has been his
Counsellor?* Answ. The Apostle here treats of cal-
ling the *Gentiles* to Salvation, and their being grafted
into the Place of the unbelieving *Jews*; as also of a
New Grace to be offer'd to the *Jews* after the Fulness
of the *Gentiles* was come in, by which all *Israel* should
have a fair Opportunity presented them of attaining
to Salvation. Now this is call'd a Mystery, not with
respect to the present time, wherein God has call'd
the *Gentiles* into his Communion, and by the Apostle
has reveal'd his Decree of calling the *Jews* a second
time; but with respect to the time past, wherein God
kept this Decree secretly lodg'd in his own Breast, and
had reveal'd it to no Man. Then indeed it was truly
a Mystery, unknown to any: and in this sense the cal-
ling of the *Gentiles*, and the Decree of calling again
the *Jews*, and several other things are call'd in Scrip-
ture ' MYSTERIES. It is a wrong Inference
then which they make; that because the Decree of
God concerning the Call of the *Gentiles* was a Mys-
tery before its Revelation, it still is an unsearchable
Mystery even after it is reveal'd. If they pretend that

' Eph. 3. 10. Rom. 11. 25. 1 Cor. 15. 51. Col. 2. 2.
Eph. 5. 32. 1 Tim. 3. 16.

it is a Myſtery even with reſpect to the preſent time, tho it runs directly counter to the whole Context, I ſay, that even in this Caſe they have no Foundation to depend upon. For in the beginning of this Chapter there is a twofold Decree or Predeſtination of God mention'd ; one concerning Salvation and Damnation ; the other concerning the Means of attaining Salvation, to be communicated to, or withheld from Men. Predeſtination in the former Senſe is no Myſtery, and we have already explain'd it. But in the latter ſenſe we own it to be an incomprehenſible Myſtery, upon the account of that Diſproportion wherein God is pleas'd to communicate the Means of Salvation to Men. For he does not beſtow an equal ſhare of Grace every where, at all times, and upon all Men. He now in Chriſt Jeſus communicates a greater meaſure of it, than he did under and before the Law. And even at preſent he does not diſpenſe his Grace with reſpect to the Qualifications of the Perſons, but ſometimes beſtows a greater ſhare of it on the leſs Worthy, or rather the more Unworthy, than he does on thoſe who are more Worthy or leſs Unworthy of ſo great a Favour. Theſe things are indeed adorable Myſteries, unſearchable by us, and ſuch as depend on the mere Good-pleaſure of God.

C H A P. II.

A Refutation of the Opinion concerning Absolute Predeſtination.

HAVING in the foregoing Chapter given a ſhort account of our Opinion concerning Divine Predeſtination ; it remains that we ſhould enquire into the Notions of others, who maintain, that Predeſtination is an Antecedent, Absolute, and Inevitable Decree of God concerning the Salvation or Damnation of every Individual Man. But herein they diſagree in their Sentiments ; which Difference of Opinions, we think, may very properly be reduced to theſe two Heads.

Opinion
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The first Opinion is that of those who maintain that God predestinated Man considered before his Fall, nay even before he was created. For the due Apprehension of this their Notion, we shall lay down the Order with respect to Priority and Posteriority, wherein they conceive that in the Decree of Predelstination God proceeded, willing one thing after, or for the sake of another. They tell us then, " That God first of
" all decreed the End, and then the Means conducing
" thereto. The ultimate End of God was the Mani-
" festation of his own Glory, which he decreed to
" demonstrate by the Declaration of his Attributes,
" especially these two, his Mercy and his Justice; his
" Mercy, by electing some Men to Salvation; and his
" Vindictive Justice, by reprobating and destining o-
" thers to Everlasting Torments. For the effecting of
" this, God decreed that there should be a Subject ca-
" pable of Misery, and accordingly decreed to create
" Man, to endue him with a Freedom of Will, and
" to prescribe him a Law: And that God might not
" fail of his End, he decreed to determine the Free-
" Will of Man on one side, and to leave Man to him-
" self, that so he might be under a certain and fatal
" Necessity of Sinning; and as all Men sinned in
" him, so should all be subject to Everlasting Death.
" Thus Man being lapsed into Sin, God decreed to
" shew his Mercy to the Elect, by appointing a Me-
" diator, by calling them to Faith and Repentance,
" by infusing these Graces into the Hearts of the Cal-
" led, and preserving the same to their Lives end, and
" at last by translating them to Everlasting Life. And
" that he might shew his Vindictive Justice with re-
" spect to the Reprobate, God decreed to deny them
" the Means of Salvation; by which Denial, Infidelity,
" Impenitence, and Eternal Destruction must needs
" ensue.

Opinion
the Sub-
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The other is the Opinion of those who make God to predestinate Man consider'd as lapsed, and by his Fall guilty of Eternal Condemnation. They proceed in the same Method with the former, but suppose the first Decree to be concerning the Creation of Men, and the other to relate to the efficacious Permission of Sin. Now tho there is some Difference between these two Opi-

Opinions, yet in the main they agree; both of them maintain, that Man fell into Sin and Misery by the Divine Direction; both of them agree that Salvation is destin'd only to a few without the Conditions of Faith and Obedience, and that by virtue of this Predestination the Means of Salvation are either afforded, or withheld inevitably: And to crown all, both of them absolutely declare, that not Sin, but the mere Will and Pleasure of God is the cause of Reprobation. We shall therefore confute both these Opinions together, since what we have to say will affect both. And in managing of this Controversy we will first produce those Arguments, which overthrow the whole Doctrine of absolute Predestination, with respect both to Election and Reprobation. Then we will offer some other Arguments, which are more particularly and especially levelled against the absolute Decree of Reprobation; and shall take into Consideration and refute the Arguments offered on the other side. Of these things we will discourse distinctly in the several Sections of this Chapter.

S E C T. I.

Arguments against Absolute Predestination in general, with respect both to Election and Reprobation.

We begin with the first sort of Arguments propounded: And the first Argument we lay down is this, Whatsoever Opinion directly perverts the Holy Scripture, is manifestly false; but the Opinion concerning Absolute Predestination does so, therefore, &c. The Minor Proposition is evinc'd by several Texts of Scripture; for whereas the Scripture tells us, *Whosoever believeth shall be saved, but whosoever believeth not shall be damned*: This Opinion teaches us the quite contrary, viz. He that will be saved, or is destined to Salvation, shall believe; but he that shall not be saved, shall not believe. The Major Proposition

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appears evident from hence, that this Perversion of the Holy Scripture cannot be consonant to Truth: For such an absolute Decree is repugnant to the requiring of Faith and Repentance as necessary Terms of Salvation, and the requiring of Faith and Repentance overthrows this absolute Decree. For God by exacting Faith and Obedience, as a necessary Duty for obtaining Eternal Life, has made it the Condition of Salvation, as he has Infidelity and Obstinacy the Condition of suffering Damnation. Now 'tis a Contradiction to say, that God decreed Salvation and Damnation unconditionally, and afterwards prescrib'd the Conditions and Terms of both.

*Tends
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The second Argument we produce, is, Whatever Doctrine tends to the Subversion of all Religion is false, but the Doctrine of absolute Predestination is of this Nature, therefore, &c. The Major Proposition needs no Proof, nor can any Christian question the Truth of it; but the Minor we will evince by the following Reasons: (1.) Because this Doctrine is apt to beget a carnal Security in those who believe themselves elected, and Despair in others who fancy themselves to be of the Number of the Reprobate, the two great Banes of all Religion. This must needs be the necessary Consequence of their Doctrine, since according to it the Decree of Predestination is so immutable, that the Elect cannot by any Sins he commits, fall from the Favour of God; nor can the Reprobate by all his Acts of Piety and Virtue attain Salvation. (2.) Because this Doctrine diverts us from the Care we ought to take of living a holy, and of avoiding an impious Course of Life: For what signifies such a Care, if the Decree be already so fixed and unchangeable, that if I am elected I shall certainly attain to Eternal Salvation, tho I neglect the Practice of Piety; but if I am reprobated, all my Holiness will avail me nothing? Let any one judg whether this be not likewise the Consequence of such a Doctrine. (3.) As a fatal Consequence of the two former, this Doctrine renders the whole Duty of Prayer insignificant. In vain do we weary God with our Prayers, who has from all Eternity made an irrevocable Decree concerning the Salvation and Damnation of every Man, and the Means tending

tending to both: For what he has decreed not to give, he will never give, let us pray till our Hearts ake; and what he has decreed to give, no Man can disannul, tho he never prays to God at all. What they offer, to take off the force of these Reasonings, is so trifling and unreasonable, that we shall not spend time to refute them, especially since we shall in their proper place reply to all the Objections, the chief at least which they can possibly make. To proceed then,

A third Argument we lay down, is, That by this ^{3. Destr} Doctrine the Merit of Christ is destroy'd: For upon ^{Christ's} the Supposition of such a Decree, it is no longer a Me- ^{Merit.} rit of Grace and Reconciliation, but of Salvation. We just hint at this, having already discours'd of it at large, in treating of the Offices of Christ.

A fourth Argument we think fit to urge, and which ^{4. Inver} is level'd against the *Supralapsarians* in particular, is, ^{the Order} That by this Opinion they invert the Natural Order ^{of Nature} or Course of Things; because they maintain a Decree concerning the everlasting Salvation and Damnation of one, of whose Creation God had made no Decree. Now 'tis plainly contrary to the Natural Order of Things, to dispose of the Eternal Salvation and Damnation of him, who is neither *Actually* nor *Potentially* (as the Schools speak) in his Causes: For since God is the first Cause of all things, he of whose Creation God had as yet made no Decree, could not be so much as *Potentially* in his Cause: And by this means not Man to be created, but Man capable of being created, would be the Object of Predestination; nor can such an one be said to be predestinated, but only predestinable. Nor can even so much as this be said, since no Decree of Creation being as yet made, Man could not by God himself be consider'd as a BEING, nor consequently as a proper Object of Predestination.

S E C T. II.

Arguments against Absolute Reprobation in particular.

Arg. I. *That Christ dy'd for all Men.*

Arguments
against
Absolute
Reprob-
ation.

Having thus laid down our Arguments against Absolute Predestination, with respect both to Election and Reprobation in general, we shall next produce those that are more immediately level'd against Absolute Reprobation in particular.

Arg. I.
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I. The first general Argument we make use of, is, Christ by the Decree and Intention of his Father dy'd for all and every Man, that he might obtain Grace and Remission of Sins for them, no Man excepted; therefore God has not absolutely reprobated any Man by an Antecedent Decree from Salvation. The Antecedent of this Argument we prove from several Texts of Scripture.

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I. From those, wherein Christ is expressly said to die for all Men. Some of which declare the Intention of God the Father, that he was pleas'd to deliver up his Son to die for all Men¹. Others in express Terms say, that Christ did die for ALL Men².

jections
swer'd.

To these places they object, that the Word ALL does not denote the Individuals of the *Genus*, as if Christ dy'd for all and every Man; but only the *Genus's* of Individuals, that he dy'd for Men of every sort or kind. Hence it is that *Beza*, to evade the Force of such Texts which contradict his Notion, in all those places renders the Word *omnes* by *Quosvis*, or *any one*; and in this Sense they pretend that the Word ALL is often taken in Scripture³. *Ans.* (1.) Upon allowing of such an Exposition of those Texts, it must be said, that there is no sort of Men whatsoever, but Christ dy'd for some of them. Now how can this be, unless he dy'd for all and every Man?

¹ If. 53. 6. Rom. 8. 32. ² 2 Cor. 5. 14, 15. 1 Tim. 2. 6. Heb. 2. 9. ³ Gen. 7. 14. Joel 2. 28. Mat. 4. 23. & 9. 35. Luk. 11. 42. Acts 10. 12. Eph. 1. 3, 8. Heb. 13. 4. 1 Cor. 10. 37. 1 Tim. 2. 8.

Add to this, that among all sorts of Men some there be who are wicked and impenitent, even to their dying Day; for some of them therefore Christ dy'd, and consequently by their own Opinion, some of them shall be sav'd, which is absurd. (2.) According to their Interpretation of the Word *Πάντες*, it may with greater Reason be said of all Men, that Christ did not die for them, or rather, that he dy'd for none of 'em at all; because according to their Opinion, in all States of Men there is much a greater Number for whom Christ did not die; and by this means ALL, *i. e.* any Man must be said to be excluded from the Benefits of Christ's Death. (3.) The Word ALL, when spoken of the most special Species, cannot denote the *Genus's* of Individuals, but only when mention is made of a thing of different Species. Now Man is the most special Species, and has no other inferior to it. (4.) The Circumstances of some Passages require sometimes a Restriction to be laid on the Word ALL; as 'tis manifest, *Joel* 2. 28. is restrain'd to the Faithful; *Heb.* 13. 4. to Persons in a marry'd State; and *1 Cor.* 10. 33. has only a Regard to those who convers'd with *St. Paul*. But in the Text, wherein Christ is said to die for all Men, no such Circumstances appear.

2. A Second Proof of our first general Argument we take from those Texts, wherein Christ is said to die for the World: As (1.) *John* 3. 16. *God so lov'd the World, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him, should not perish, but have everlasting Life.* Now the Word WORLD in this Place denotes all Mankind in general. (2.) Another place to the same purpose is, *2 Cor.* 5. 19. *God was in Christ reconciling the World to himself, not imputing their Trespases to them.* (3.) In *1 John* 2. 1, 2. it is said, *Little Children these things write I unto you, that ye sin not: And if any Man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the Righteous; and he is the Propitiation for our Sins, and not for ours only, but also for the Sins of the whole World.* In this Text 'tis manifestly declar'd that Christ has not made a Propitiation for ours, *i. e.* for the Sins of the Faithful only, but for the Sins of the whole World.

2. From
Texts
wherein
Christ is
said to die
for the
World.

jections
answer'd.

¶ Let us now hear what our Adversaries have to say against those plain Texts of Scripture. Against the first Place they object, that by **WORLD** is often meant, not all Men, or the whole World, but only a great part of the World; for the proof of which they produce several Places of Scripture¹: Therefore say they, in *St. John* the word **WORLD** denotes only a part of it, *viz.* the Elect, to whom Christ is become a Saviour. *Ans.* We readily grant the former part of this Assertion, but we positively deny that in Scripture by **WORLD** is meant only the Elect, since in several places thereof the Wicked and Sinners are stil'd the **WORLD**, in opposition to Believers and the Elect²; but the Elect on the contrary are said *to be chosen out of the World*³. Again, in opposition to the same Place they object, that the **WORLD** which God is said to have lov'd, means not the World of Reprobates, whom he never lov'd, but only the Elect. *Ans.* By the Love of God here treated of, we are not to understand the Love of Friendship or Complacency, which is always join'd with a Determination to Salvation, and implies a more especial and peculiar Application of the Benefits purchas'd by the Death of Christ, and is only extended to those who believe in Christ: but by it we are to understand the Love of Benevolence, whereby God wish'd well to all Men, and decreed to give Grace and Salvation to all Men, provided they believe. This Love is universal, and extends to all Men; and from hence did the Mission of Christ into the World proceed.

As to the second Place, they again pretend that by **WORLD** we are to understand the Elect; which appears from hence, that God is said *to have reconcil'd the World to himself, and not to impute their Sins*. Now (say they) he has reconcil'd none to himself besides the Elect, and 'tis their Sins alone which he has not imputed to them. *Ans.* (1.) We have already evinc'd, that to understand by **WORLD** the Elect, is contrary to the Stile of Scripture. (2.) Nor does

¹ Joh. 7. 4. & 12. 19. Luk. 2. 1. Rev. 12. 9. ² Joh. 14. 17. & 17. 9. ³ Joh. 15. 19.

the Text admit of such a Sense, since all are said to be reconcil'd to whom the Word of Reconciliation or the Gospel was sent; now this was sent not to the absolutely Elect alone, but to all Men indifferently. But (3.) to take off the Force of their Reason we say, that Reconciliation may be consider'd either as it is universal extending to all Men, or as it is peculiar only to the Elect. In the former Sense it means God's being so far pleas'd by the Death of Christ, as that he would not punish Men for their former Offences, but laid aside his Anger, and enter'd into a Covenant of Grace with Men, being ready to bestow Eternal Salvation on all who should perform the Conditions of the New Covenant: But in the latter, it is a more particular Application of this Reconciliation to the Believer, which is always join'd with an Intention of saving him. That the Apostle in the Place under Debate meant Reconciliation in the first Sense, is plain from the Words which immediately follow; for having said, that God was in Christ, reconciling the World to himself, &c. he adds, *We as Ambassadors for Christ, as tho God did beseech you by us, pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconcil'd to God.* Now to what purpose did St. Paul make this passionate Intreaty, had the Persons he spoke to been already fully reconcil'd to God?

What they urge against the plain Passage of St. John, hardly deserves a Reply; we shall therefore only take notice of one main Exception which they make. Christ, say they, is said to be the Propitiation for the Sins of the whole World, because his Death consider'd in it self was a sufficient Price for the Redemption of all Men. *Ans.* We do not enquire what was the Sufficiency of Christ's Death consider'd in it self, but of what Avail it was with respect to others, whom God was pleas'd to make the better for the Merits of this Death: Else what Comfort would there be to a Sinner, that Christ is (as St. John assures him) an Advocate with the Father? What is a Sinner the better for considering that Christ's Blood is a sufficient Ransom for all Men, if it were only shed for a few Elect, and himself debar'd of that Benefit by an antecedent Decree of God?

3. From those Places where it is said to die for Sinners.

3. A Third Proof we deduce from those Places of Scripture, where our Saviour is said to come into the World to save Sinners¹; and to seek and save that which was lost²; which he could not have done but by means of his Death. Since therefore the Scripture-Expression is indefinite, without any Restriction whereby to denote, that Jesus came into the World to save some Sinners only, we fairly infer that he dy'd indefinitely for all Sinners, and not only for the Elect.

4. From those where it is said to die for those who perish.

4. Another Proof of our first general Argument is taken from those Texts, wherein Christ is said to die not only for the Elect, but even for those who may and do actually perish. Thus 'tis said, Rom. 14. 15. *Destroy not him with thy Meat for whom Christ dy'd*: And in a parallel Place, 1 Cor. 8. 11. *Through thy Knowledge shall the weak Brother perish, for whom Christ dy'd*? Again, Heb. 10. 29. *Of how much sorer Punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the Blood of the Covenant where-with he was sanctify'd an unholy thing, and hath done despite to the Spirit of Grace*? Lastly, 2 Pet. 2. 1. *There shall be false Teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable Heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them*.

Objections answer'd.

To the two first of these Passages they object: (1.) That the Apostle here treats not of the truly Faithful, but of those who seem'd to be such, and for whom Christ in a charitable Sense may be reckon'd to die. *Ans.* This is contrary to the Scope of both Chapters; for the Apostle was minded to aggravate the Sin of those Men, who by an unseasonable eating of things indifferent, gave Offence to their weak Brother; and adds this Reason, *because they would destroy him for whom Christ dy'd*; which Reason would have been of no force, if Christ had not really, but only in a charitable Sense dy'd for them. (2.) They object, that here it is not said what should happen, but only what Influence the Offence given would have upon the weak Brother in order to his Destruction, since he who gives the Offence does as much as in him lies

¹ 1 Tim. 1. 15. ² Luk. 19. 10. Mat. 18. 12.

lead his weak Brother into Destruction, into which he would also fall, did not God restrain him by his All-powerful Grace. *Ans.* We do not say that the Destruction of a weak Brother would always follow, whether he did or did not take the Offence; but that the Apostle informs us, not only of the natural Tendency of such an Offence, but also what it might effect, *viz.* that our weak Brother might fall into Sin, and thereby be destroy'd. If this be not granted, the whole Force of St. Paul's Reason falls to the Ground.

Against the third Passage produc'd, they likewise urge, that the Apostle does not therein treat of the truly Faithful, but only of those who made an outward Profession of Faith. *Ans.* They are not said to be sanctify'd by an external Profession, but by the Blood of the New Covenant, or of Jesus Christ; which is impossible, if it were not shed for them.

To the Words of St. Peter they say, that he does not treat of Redemption by the Blood of Christ (since the Word *λυτρώσας* is not made use of, but *ἀπολύτῳ*) but of the buying or Deliverance from the Sins of the Gentiles, by embracing the Doctrine of Jesus Christ: Nor (as they further urge) does St. Peter speak of denying Christ, but God the Father, since the Word *δοξάσας* is in the Original, and not *ἐκείνῳ*, the common Appellation given to our Saviour. *Ans.* (1.) The Knowledge of Christ always includes the Knowledge of his Death, and his Doctrine alone does not deliver us from Sin, unless join'd with his Death. (2.) They who are freed from the Sins of the Gentiles, and have really avoided the Pollutions of the World by the Knowledge they have of the Doctrine of Christ, are also redeem'd by the Death of Christ, since no other Cause could have procur'd their Deliverance. (3.) The original Word *ἀπολύτῳ* is us'd to denote Redemption by the Death of Christ, as well as the Word *λυτρώσας*. (4.) Tho we own that the Word *ἐκείνῳ* commonly denotes Christ, yet the Word *δοξάσας* may likewise be appl'd to him, as well as it is elsewhere² by their own Confession. (5.) If they deny God the

¹ 1 Cor. 6. 20. & 7. 23. Rev. 5. 9. ² Jul. v. 4.

Father, with much greater Reason may it be said, that they deny his Ambassador Christ, since the one is included in the other.

From
Absur-
ties of
contra-
Opinion.

5. The last Proof we shall make use of in defence of our first General Argument, is taken from the several Absurdities which would follow from the contrary Opinion. And (1.) (we say, That ALL to whom Christ is preach'd are bound to believe in him, which they cannot do unless they look upon him as their Saviour, who really dy'd for them. From hence it follows that Christ dy'd for all Men, otherwise all those for whom Christ did not die would be oblig'd to believe a Lye; and by this means a Falsity might become the Object of Divine Faith, which is very absurd. (2.) If Christ did not die for ALL, then no Man when Christ is preach'd to him can be sure that he is bound to believe in Christ; which is likewise very absurd. (3.) If Christ did not die for ALL, no Man will be condemn'd for Infidelity, which is absurd, and directly contrary to the Scripture, which makes Unbelief the Cause of Condemnation. (4.) If Christ did not die for ALL, neither God nor Christ could command, that Baptism should be administer'd to all who make an outward Profession of Faith: For Baptism is the Seal of the Gracious Covenant made through Christ, which on God's part contains the Promise of Pardon of Sins, and offering sufficient Grace to obey the Divine Commands; on Man's part, an Engagement of performing his Duty. Now if Christ dy'd for none but the Elect, and made a Covenant only for them, then this Baptismal Seal will be uncertain, and with respect to the greatest part of Mankind apparently false: And by this means in Baptism, which is administer'd in the Name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, God is call'd upon to be a Witness to a Falshood, which is Blasphemy to assert.) These are the Absurdities under which the Absolute *Predestinarians* Opinion labours, and for which they can find no Reply, but what is insignificant and deserves no Answer.

† Joh. 3. 18, 19, 36. Mat. 16. 16. 2 Thess. 1. 8, 9.

S E C T. III.

An Answer to the Arguments, by which it is pretended that Christ did not die for all Men.

Hitherto you have seen our Proofs, that Christ dy'd for all Men; we shall in this Section take into Consideration and refute the Arguments produc'd by our Adversaries, in maintenance of their Opinion, which may be distributed into two Classes: First such Arguments, whereby they endeavour to prove that Christ only dy'd for those who were absolutely elected: And Secondly such whereby they would evince, that Christ did not die for all Men.

An Answer to several Objections, wherein is maintain'd that Christ did only for the Elect

In the first place then they endeavour to evince, that Christ only dy'd for those who were absolutely elected, by this Phrase of *dying for any Man*, which, say they, denotes the dying in another's stead, and so that the other should be freed from Death: From whence it follows, that all for whom Christ dy'd are free from Death; which cannot be said of the Wicked, and those who are finally impenitent, since they shall be damn'd: therefore Christ did not die for all Men. *To the First Objection.* *Ans.* *To die for any one*, does not always and necessarily signify dying in another's stead, so that he for whom we die should actually be deliver'd from Death; but to die for the Sake or Benefit of another, tho an actual Deliverance from Death as to him for whom we die, should not follow. Thus the good Shepherd is said *to lay down his Life for the Sheep*: When yet it may so happen after he has done this, or is torn in pieces by the Wolf, that the Sheep also shall be torn in pieces. Christ therefore dy'd for, or in the stead of all Men, not that they might actually and necessarily attain Salvation; but that on God's and Christ's part, a way to Salvation might be open'd to Men thro the Death of Christ, as of a Sacrifice slain for Sins, that the New Covenant might be ratify'd,

and that the Sins of all who perform the Terms of the Covenant might actually be blotted out. And in this Sense he dy'd, even for the Wicked and those who are finally impenitent, since by virtue of his Death they have obtain'd such a measure of God's Grace, by the Assistance of which they might be able to repent of their Sins, and by that means attain everlasting Life; but because they refus'd to lay hold of that Grace, they are deservedly depriv'd of the Fruits of Christ's Death, and incur a fore Damnation.

To the se-
cond Ob-
jection.

Another Argument they take from those Places of Scripture, wherein Christ is said *to die for his Sheep*¹; *That he might gather together in one, the Children of God that were scatter'd abroad*²; *for his Church*³; and that *he might save his People*⁴. Now say they, those are not all Men, but the Elect only. *Answ.* (1.) In all those Places the exclusive Particle *Only* is wanting, and it would be as ridiculous to infer from them, that because Christ dy'd for his Sheep, &c. therefore he dy'd for them only, as it would be to conclude from *Gal. 2. 20.* Christ dy'd for *Paul*, therefore for *Paul* alone. (2.) The Sheep of Christ, the Children of God, &c. do not denote those who are elected absolutely, for they (as we have already seen) stand in no need of Reconciliation, but signify the Faithful or Believers. (3.) He did not die for his Sheep consider'd as such, *i. e.* for them who believe and are already converted, but for them consider'd still as Sinners and Wicked⁵. (4.) None of the Places refer'd to by them, treat of procuring Remission of Sins by the Death of Christ, the Point in debate, but of the actual Application of Remission; the former we say is common to all Men, the latter peculiar only to the Believers and the Converted.

To the
third Ob-
jection.

A third Argument is drawn from those Places, where Christ is said *to die for Many*⁶. *Answ.* (1.) This Objection looks a little odd in them who maintain, that *Rom. 5. 15, 19.* by the word *Many*, on whom

¹ Joh. 10. 15. ² Joh. 11. 52. ³ Acts 20. 29. Eph. 5. 25.
⁴ Mat. 1. 21. ⁵ Joh. 3. 16. Rom. 5. 6. ⁶ Joh. 4. 10. ⁶ Mat.
20. 28. & 26. 28. Mar. 10. 45. Heb. 9. 18.

Condemnation came by the Sin of *Adam*, we are to understand *ALL* Men; for why should not the same Sense be allow'd in the Case before us, unless we suppose *Adam's* Transgression to be more powerful to condemn, than the Death of Christ is to justify and save Men? (2.) Since the Scripture in some places says, that Christ dy'd for *All Men*, and in others for *Many*; the thing it self requires that the Word *Many* should be enlarg'd by *All*, and not *All* restrain'd by *Many*.

Their fourth Argument runs thus: They for whom Christ dy'd cannot fall into Condemnation, since they can say, *Who is it that condemns us? 'tis Christ that dy'd for us*. *To the fourth Objection.* Answ. This Passage treats of the truly Faithful, who suffer'd very grievous Persecutions for the sake of Christ, as is evident from the Series of the whole Chapter. The Apostle then; to cheer them up against all Afflictions, informs them, that no Creature, how spiteful and tormenting soever, was able to cast them into Condemnation; because Christ had dy'd for them, and the Reconciliation purchas'd by his Death was already apply'd to them, so that the Father would bestow upon them everlasting Salvation. But it by no means follows from hence, that they for whom Grace is purchas'd by Christ, by the Help of which they may believe, and by believing may obtain a closer Application of the Divine Grace and Remission of Sins, may not by their Sins fall short of this nearer Application, and incur Damnation, tho no body can condemn them if they do their Duty.

A fifth Argument is; They for whom Christ dy'd were highly beloved by Christ, for greater Love cannot be than for one to die for another². *To the fifth Objection.* Answ. There are two sorts of Love, one of Benevolence, which is extended to all, even to the Undeserving and Wicked; another of Complacency, towards the Pious who discharge their Duty. The former is of a more noble Nature, since 'tis more generous to love an Enemy than a Friend; but the latter is the more intense Degree of Love, since we love a Friend more ardently

¹ Rom. 8. 34. ² Joh. 15. 13.

than an Enemy. Again, the highest Degree of the Love of Benevolence is to lay down one's Life for another; nor can there be a more generous Act of Love thought on, than of dying for one's Enemy: Christ then dying for Men, lov'd them with the Love of Benevolence, and express'd the highest Instance of Love towards them; but to the Faithful and Obedient he expresses the more intense Degree of Love, the Love of Friendship.

to the
eth Ob-
sion.

Their Sixth Argument is; 'Christ intercedes for those for whom he dy'd', but he does not intercede for all, 'only for the Elect'. *Ans.* (1.) How can it be infer'd that because Christ in his Prayer, mention'd *Joh. 17.* does not pray for the World, he never prays for it? Nay but a little after this Prayer, whilst he hung upon the Cross, he pray'd for his Crucifiers, and certainly they will not say that all those were elected. (2.) By *those whom the Father gave him*, our Saviour means none else besides the Apostles, as is plain not only from the whole Contexture of that Prayer, but particularly from *v. 12.*

Answer
Argu-
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Christ dy'd
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The other sort of Arguments to be consider'd and refuted, are those whereby they maintain that Christ did not die for all Men, and endeavour to raise some Absurdities against our Opinion, thereby to convict it of Falshood.

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The first of these Arguments is: "If by the Death of Christ Grace and Pardon of Sins be purchas'd for all, 'tis necessary that this Word of Grace and Redemption should be preach'd to all and every Man, at all and every time, that by Faith they might partake of this Reconciliation; else Christ dy'd in vain for many, to whom this Revelation was never made, which is absurd. Now this Word of Reconciliation was not so universally preach'd, since before the Coming of Christ God excluded the *Gentiles* from the Knowledg of his Law, nor did he permit the Apostles for some time to preach the Gospel in *Asia*; and at present the *Indians* and

¹ Rom. 8. 34. ² Joh. 17. ³ Luk. 23. 34. ⁴ Ps. 147. 19.
20. Acts 14. 16. ⁵ Acts 16. 6.

“others have no Knowledge of it.” *Answ.* (1.) When we say that Christ dy’d for all Men, that so they might all by the Benefit of his Death attain everlasting Life, we have a more especial Eye on those to whom the Gospel is preach’d; for if it be true that Christ dy’d for all ~~such~~, the absolute Decree of Reprobation falls of course to the ground. (2.) The Word of Reconciliation by the Intention and Command of God the Father and of Christ, and according to the Nature of Reconciliation, ought to be preach’d to all and every Man¹. (3.) Nor has there been any Age, wherein Men have been wholly depriv’d of it. Immediately after the Fall the Promise was made, that *the Seed of the Woman should bruise the Serpent’s Head*: And this related to all Men alike; nay before *Abraham*, and more especially to him and his Posterity were some Discoveries made from time to time of the Covenant of Grace: And in the time of the Gospel his Word of Reconciliation was preach’d to all Men every where, without any Distinction or Respect of Persons, according to the express Command of God². But supposing that the preaching of the Gospel has fail’d among some of old, and at present, yet the Reason of this is not the Decree of Absolute Reprobation, or because God would not suffer the Benefit of Christ’s Death to be extended to them; but the Fault of the Men themselves, who either slighted, or despis’d, or held this Word of Grace in Unrighteousness; wherefore God in just Judgment has depriv’d, and still deprives them of his Grace.

But to give a more especial Reply; We say, that the People who at present are destitute of the Know-^{A more special} ledg of Christ, are either such as were invited for-^{Reply} merly to embrace Christianity by the preaching of the Gospel, but are again depriv’d of that Divine Grace through their own Wickedness and Infidelity; or such to whom the Gospel has never been preach’d. With respect to the former this easy Answer may be given: That God did once manifest his Grace to them,

¹ Mat. 28. 18. ² 1 Tim. 2. 4. ³ Acts 17. 30. Rom. 10. 18. Col. 1. 23,

and requir'd that they should by preaching hand it down to their Posterity, which if they neglected, the Fault is wholly theirs, and not God's. With respect to those to whom the Gospel has never been preach'd, such as the modern *Indians*, &c. their Case is somewhat different. But here we say, (1.) That 'tis certain God has now taken away all Distinction of Persons, and would have the Gospel be preach'd to all Nations, and to all and every Man without Exception. (2.) God has erected a Ministry of his Word, and sent his Ministers to all People to convert them to the Faith, and that they when converted might appoint other Ministers; which is as much as if he virtually call'd all of them: Now if Men fail in their Duty, or the People to whom they come are so obstinate, as to drive away the Teachers by open Force, and to shut their Ears against the Divine Truth, this again is not God's Fault, but the whole Fault lies at Mens doors. (3.) It is possible, that God will not expressly send the Ministers of his Word to some, there being some weighty Reasons on Mens part which may obstruct this Divine Mission: For 'tis certain God never denies the Communication of his Grace, but upon the account of the Demerits of Men.

Two Que- To what we have said, two Queries may be made.
s an- First, Whether those Men are more unworthy, than
er'd. the rest to whom the Gospel is preach'd? *Answ.* We cannot say any such thing, since the Scripture describes the State of all Men before the Divine Call as most corrupt. And tho sometimes God in the Distribution of his Grace, has a regard to the good Dispositions of Men, yet 'tis not always so, but sometimes passing by the less Unworthy, he bestows a greater measure of Grace on the more Unworthy. This we have elsewhere observ'd to be indeed a Mystery, unsearchable by us, and lodg'd in the Womb of the Divine Wisdom. But after all, 'tis certain, that God denies Grace to no Man, unless it be for his own Demerit.

¹ Eph. 2. 12, 13. Gal. 3. 28. Col. 3. ² Mat. 21. 43. Rev. 2. 5. ³ Rom. 1. 2, 3. Eph. 2. 2, 3. Tit. 3. 3. ⁴ Mat. 10. 12. Acts 13. 10. ⁵ Mat. 11. 21, 22. & 12. 41, 42.

Secondly, it may farther be ask'd, Whether they to whom the Gospel is not reveal'd, can be Partakers of Everlasting Salvation; since the Scripture says, that *Salvation is to be had in Christ alone*¹, that *he who has not the Son, has not Life*², and that without Faith in Christ none shall be sav'd³. *Ans.* (1.) No Man is oblig'd to know those things, which God has not, or will not reveal to him⁴, nor will any Man be damn'd for the want of such a Knowledg⁵. (2.) However no Man will be sav'd, but by Redemption in the Blood of Christ: Which as it was available to those who liv'd before Christ, tho they either did not know him, or only obscurely by Types and Figures; so nothing hinders, but that it also may be imputed to those, who after he was preach'd to the World are ignorant of him, not through any Fault of their own, not indeed by virtue of any Divine Promise, but out of the boundless Mercy of God. (3.) The Places cited treat only of those who through Unbelief reject Christ when preach'd to them: to such there is no Salvation. (4.) God indeed no where promises Salvation to them, who without Faith in Christ live agreeably to the Law of Nature; yet this is no Bar, but that out of his abundant Grace he may perform more than he has promis'd, yet always with respect had to Christ, so that whatever Salvation they may have the Benefit of, it shall be given them for the sake of Christ. (5.) An Author of our own*, who maintains that no Man shall be sav'd but who believes in Jesus Christ, yet thinks it hard that the *Gentiles* and those who never heard of Christ should be damn'd for what they cannot help, has therefore advanc'd a favourable Hypothesis in their behalf: He supposes that they who before or after the Coming of Christ, never heard of him or his Doctrine, shall before the general Resurrection be rais'd again; that then the Gospel and the Terms of it shall be propos'd to them, and that if they hearken to the one, and live up to the other, they likewise shall

¹ Acts 4. 12. ² 1 Joh. 5. 12. ³ Mat. 16. 16. ⁴ Joh. 15. 22, 24. ⁵ Rom. 2. 12.

* Mr. Staynoe in his *Treatise of Salvation by Christ alone.*

Be say'd by Faith in Christ; but if they reject those gracious Overtures of Reconciliation, they shall finally be rejected by God, and damn'd justly for their Obstinacy and Unbelief, the Blame only chargeable upon themselves. Now tho this be but an Hypothesis, not prov'd directly by any plain, but some mystical Places of Scripture, and consequently nothing of Certainty can be built upon it; yet as it is highly charitable, so is it very agreeable to the Notions we have of the Divine Perfections of Justice, Wisdom and Goodness. Upon the whole, let not us who enjoy the Light of the Gospel and so clear a Revelation, enquire what God can, may, or will do with those who have been and are as yet debar'd of those Privileges; let us rather, as it more immediately concerns us, enquire whether we have liv'd up to the Terms of the Gospel reveal'd to us: If we have, when we come to Heaven we shall have no occasion to complain, let God be as gracious and extend his Mercy to the *Gentiles* in what Measure and Method he thinks fit. But to proceed,

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Their second Argument is, "If Christ dy'd for all, then for *Cain*, the *Sodomites*, *Pharaoh*, *Judas*, &c. who dy'd in Impenitency before his Death; as well as for *Abel*, *Lot*, *Abraham*, *David*, *Peter*, &c."

Ans. (1.) We in answer to the foregoing Argument said, that we had chiefly a regard to those who live after Christ's Death, and to whom the Gospel is announc'd. (2.) That tho the Wicked who dy'd before Christ in their Impenitence could not reap any Benefit from his Death, yet Christ is truly said to die for them. For had they before their Death seriously been converted to God, (as they might have been by the Divine Grace assisting them) they would have met with Remission of Sins in the Blood of Christ afterwards to be pour'd out, as well as those who did repent and slept in Piety long before the Death of Christ, and whose Salvation was already confirm'd to them. (3.) As to the Case of *Judas*, we say, First that he was but one single Man; and supposing that Christ did not die for him by reason of the Enormity of his Treachery and Villany, yet this can be no Exception against the Universality of the Benefit purchas'd by the Death of Christ. But we have

have no need to except him; and therefore more directly say, that Christ dy'd even for *Judas*, and that he might have been Partaker of the Fruits of his Master's Death; since by the Grace communicated to him he might have abstain'd from that unparallel'd Sin of betraying his Master; and even after he had committed it, if he had repented, he might have obtain'd Pardon of God.

Their next Argument is form'd thus; "If they can
"perish, and some of them do perish for whom Christ
"dy'd, then their Sins are punish'd twice; once in
"Christ who dy'd for them, and again in themselves,
"by suffering the Punishment of Eternal Fire." *Ans.*

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Third.

In treating of the Priestly Office of Christ, we shew'd at large, that properly speaking he was not punish'd for Men, since he did not suffer what they deserv'd, but was rather a Sacrifice for their Sins, whereby to reconcile them to his Father upon the Terms of Faith and Repentance. They therefore who fail in the performance of those Terms, their Sins are not punish'd twice; but by their own Fault they make the Sacrifice of Christ to be of none effect to them, tho design'd for their Salvation; and not only so, but by this fresh Obstinacy they render themselves guilty of a much severer Punishment.

A fourth Argument is; "If Christ dy'd for all Men,
"then likewise for Infants dying in their Infancy,
"which is what the *Remonstrants* do not believe: For
"they maintain that Infants are not born with Original Sin, nor are guilty of Eternal Damnation; therefore, according to them, Infants dying young stand
"in need of no Saviour. *Ans.* Tho this be the *Remonstrants* Opinion, yet they believe that Infants derive an hereditary Death from *Adam*, from which they could not be freed but by Christ. He did therefore die even for those Infants, according to the *Remonstrants*; not because he deliver'd them from Sins properly so call'd, for such they had none; but because he redeem'd them from the Death entail'd upon them by *Adam*, and translated them to the Possession of Everlasting Life.

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Fourth.

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Their fifth Argument is; "If Christ dy'd for all Men, even for those who may and do perish, then even they who do believe in Christ as dying for them, can have no Consolation from his Death, nor any Certainty of their Salvation, since they may perish after all; but this is absurd and contrary to what the Apostle teaches, *Rom. 8. 34.*" *Answ.* We have elsewhere said enough to confute this Argument, and have retorted the Consequence of it upon those, who maintain the Predestination of the Elect only; and therefore we will not at present insist upon it, referring our Reader to the two foregoing Sections of this Chapter.

S E C T. IV.

Argument II. *That God was willing that all Men should be sav'd.*

God would have all Men to be sav'd; prov'd, Our second general Argument is, That God would have all Men to be sav'd, and come to the Knowledge of the Truth: Therefore he has precluded no Man from Salvation by an Absolute and Antecedent Decree. The Consequence is self-evident, the Antecedent needs only to be prov'd, which we shall do from several Texts of Scripture.

1. From Ezek. 18. 32. In the first place we read, *Ezek. 18. 32. For I have no Pleasure in the Death of him that dieth, saith the Lord, wherefore turn your selves and live ye.* Parallel to this is *Chap. 33. 11. As I live, saith the Lord God, I have no Pleasure in the Death of the Wicked, but that the Wicked turn from his Way and live; turn ye, turn ye from your evil Ways, for why will ye die, O House of Israel?*

An Objection answer'd. To this it may be objected, that God would not the Death of a penitent Sinner. *Answ.* Since the Absolute Predestinarians themselves maintain that none besides the Elect do repent, 'tis very odd in them to introduce God so pathetically asserting and swearing by himself, that he would not the Death of those Men, whom he had elected by an Absolute and Eternal Decree, and who consequently could by no means perish, but

but must necessarily repent. Add to this, unless this were a general Obtestation respecting all Sinners, it will not agree with the Exhortation that follows, *Turn ye, &c. For why will ye die O House of Israel?* Nor does it signify any thing to say, If God wills not the Death of a Sinner, he might prevent it, since he is Omnipotent: For God does not always make use of his Almighty Power in hindring those things which he wills not; in preventing what depends on the Free-will of Man, he makes use of such Means as are most suitable to a free Agent, such as Precepts, Exhortations, Promises, Threatnings, and the Assistance of the Spirit; all which are as so many plain Evidences that God wills not the Death of a Sinner.

Another Place is 1 Tim. 2. 4. *God will have all 2. From Men to be saved, and to come to the Knowledg of the 1 Tim. 2. 4. Truth.*

To this Text they make several Exceptions. As *Objections* first, they have recourse to their old Subterfuge, and *answered.* tell us that the Apostle does not here speak of the Individuals as contain'd in their Genus's, but of the several kinds of Individuals. *Ans.* This piece of Sophistry we have already refuted in treating of the Universality of Christ's Death, and therefore need not repeat the same things over again. We only add, that the very Context will not allow of such an Interpretation to be put upon the Words, tho it might prevail in any other Place: For the Apostle, *Ver. 1.* commands us to make Prayers for all Men, giving this for a Reason, *because God will have ALL Men to be saved.* Now God commands us not to pray for the several Kinds or Sorts of Individuals, but for the Individuals of every Kind. Had not this been so, the Faithful would have been at an Uncertainty for whom they ought to have prayed, and could only pray for the several Genus's of Men; for instance, God would have us pray for Magistrates, &c. but if this were to be understood only of the Genus of Magistracy, a Believer would be at a loss whether he ought to pray for that particular Magistrate under whose Government he lives, since he cannot infer, *Because God wills some Magistrates to be saved, mine is one of them.* It therefore follows, because God wills us to pray for every Man,

he also wills not only that the Genus's of Individuals, but also the Individuals of the Genus's should be saved. And what a wretched Reply they make to this, when they say, *If we must pray for all Men, then also for the Dead*, will appear if we consider, (1.) That the Apostle here treats only of the Living. (2.) That this may be re-torted upon them; for if we must pray for all Genus's, then for the Genus of the Dead: But this Consequence they deny, which shews the Invalidity of their own.

Another Text we produce in defence of our second General Argument, is Rom. 11. 32. *God hath concluded them all in Unbelief, that he might have Mercy on All.* That this Place cannot admit of that restrained Sense which they would put upon other Texts, is plain from the Nature of an *Antithesis*: For all on whom God has Mercy, are opposed to all whom he has concluded in Unbelief. As therefore he has concluded All without exception in Unbelief, as those Men maintain; so also by parity of Reason he has Mercy on All, not one excepted.

The fourth and last Place we shall alledg, is 2 Pet. 3. 9. *The Lord is not slack concerning his Promise, but is patient to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that ALL should come to Repentance.*

To this Text they object, that St. Peter treats of the Elect only, as appears (say they) from the Pronoun US, which he makes use of. *Answ.* (1.) The Apostle by the Pronoun US denotes all Men, it being customary with the Apostles to use the first Person Plural, thereby to include themselves in the common Mass of Mankind: And in this Sense is the Pronoun WE taken in several Places of Scripture. (2.) Suppose we should allow any Restriction, yet it can be restrain'd no farther than to those to whom St. Peter writes, which was the Catholick Church, wherein the Bad and Good live promiscuously together. (3.) Nor would they be any thing the better for such a Concession; since Peter says not, *that God is not willing that any of US should perish*; which would have afforded some Pretence to their Ob-

jection; but only not willing *that any should perish.*
 (4.) If this were to be understood of the Elect only, there could have been no need of the Longanimity of God, which St. *Peter*, so much magnifies; since he could not exercise it either towards the Elect, or towards the Reprobate, and that for Reasons formerly assign'd.

S E C T. V.

Argument III. *That the Doctrine of Absolute Reprobation is repugnant to the Divine Perfections of Holiness, Justice, Sincerity, Wisdom, and Love.*

Our third General Argument is, That the Doctrine of Absolute Reprobation is derogatory of God's Glory, being repugnant to several of his Attributes, such as his Holiness, Justice, Sincerity, Wisdom, and Love or *Philanthropy*.

I. It is repugnant to the Holiness of God, in that it makes him to be the Author of Sin; which is evident from the Opinion both of the *Supralapsarians*, and of the *Sublapsarians*. With respect to the *Supralapsarians*, the Case is self-evident; since they maintain that God before he had decreed to create Man, had decreed his Ruin; and that he might inflict this justly upon Man, he decreed that Man should fall into Sin, which is the Means of bringing the Reprobate into the Destruction to which they were destin'd *. Whether therefore Sin be said to exist by the Effective or Permissive Decree of God, the Case is the same; because by virtue of the Decree concerning the End, the Decree concerning the Means tending to that End, does necessarily exist, and the Execution of it is necessary, so that Man is fatally determin'd, and it is not in his power

*Doctrine
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nant,*

*1. To the
Holiness
of God.*

* Thus Sanchius de Nat. Dei, l. 5. c. 2. p. 744. Non dubitamus confiteri, immutabili Reprobatione necessitatem peccandi, & quidem sine Resipiscentiâ ad mortem usque peccandi, Reprobos incumbere.

to avoid sinning, which is enough to make God the Author of Sin. Nor is the Case less plain with respect to the *Sublapsarians*; for tho they do not maintain that God decreed Sin as a means of attaining his End, yet they tell us that *Adam* by the Divine Decree fell necessarily into Sin, from whence of necessity follow'd all the Sins committed afterwards, and the Corruption of all Mankind: Which is, with the *Supralapsarians*, to make God the Author of Sin. Nay, both of them teach us, that God imputes *Adam's* Sin to all his Posterity, and that by this Imputation the Necessity of sinning follows: Therefore God by this his Imputation is the Author of all the Sins consequent thereupon. Now what can be more dishonourable, what more unworthy of God, than to make him the Author of Sin, which is so highly inconsistent with his Holiness, which he severely forbids, and threatens to punish with no less than Everlasting Torments? Certainly this is so monstrous, that this single Consideration might be enough to deter all who are concern'd for the Glory of God, from embracing such a harsh and unbecoming Doctrine.

2. To his justice. II. Nor is it less repugnant to the Divine Justice: (1.) Because God is suppos'd to reprobate Men, consider'd as innocent, as the *Supralapsarians* maintain; or those whom he by his mere Will and Pleasure would render guilty when they deserv'd no such thing, which is the *Sublapsarians* Notion: but both these are contrary to the very Nature of Justice. To predestinate an innocent Person to Eternal Destruction, is beyond the Bounds of Divine Right, which is limited by the Rectitude or Righteousness of the Divine Nature, as we have elsewhere * evinc'd at large. Nor is it less unjust to reprobate Men, who are render'd guilty not voluntarily but by the Determination of God. For they cannot in any Propriety of Speech be said to be guilty, who have not the Power of avoiding the Sin: But he is properly guilty, who when it was in his Power to have avoided Sin, yet made choice of it by his own free and voluntary Act. (2.) It is repugnant

* B. 2. Ch. 4. §. 6.

to the Divine Justice, since by this Decree God is suppos'd to require of the Reprobate, under the Penalty of Eternal Damnation, Faith and Obedience, tho he has either taken away, or decreed not to give them the Power of performing these Terms. Now what can be more contrary to Justice than this? For no Man, as Nature it self teaches us, is bound to do Impossibilities; much less can he render himself guilty of Eternal Punishment for the Non-performance thereof: For the Guilt of the greatest and severest Punishment requires such a Power and Faculty, whereby thou may'st be able to preserve thy self free from that Guilt. Necessity absolves thee from the Fault, and consequently from the Guilt.

To these plain Reasons, they on the other side make *Objections* several Objections, which we shall briefly state, and as *answer* briefly answer

First, They tell us, " That God in the Business of " Predestination does not act as a Judg, but as a Sovereign Lord." *Ans.* (1.) The Dominion of God, as it ought not, so it cannot be separated from his Justice, by which it is always govern'd: And especially when the Eternal Damnation of Men, the severest of Punishments, is concern'd, the Quality of a Judg ought not to be distinct from that of a Sovereign. (2.) God himself shews, that he will not deal with us as an Absolute Lord, but as a Judg: Because as a just Lord, the Judg of the whole World, he has prescrib'd Laws under the Sanction of Rewards and Punishments, according to which he has declar'd that he will judg us: So that all his Acts relating to the Eternal Destruction of Men are Judicial, from whence it is that the Punishment is stil'd DAMNATION.

Again they say, " That Reprobation is not a Destination to Punishment, but a bare Preterition, or Non-Election to Glory." *Ans.* (1.) This cannot be said by those *, who expressly maintain that Reprobation is a Destination to Eternal Destruction. (2.) Tho others use softer Expressions, yet in reality they agree with the former. For what is this Preterition? Is it a bare

* As Calvin, Beza, Whitaker, &c.

Negation of all Divine Actions? Has God determined nothing about those that are passed by? Surely they will not venture to assert this. Since then the Elect are destined to Life Eternal, let them tell us to what those who are not elected, but passed by, are destined? Doubtless they cannot say to any other End than to everlasting Death.

Thirdly they urge; "That God was Debtor to none; and tho Man should want those Abilities which are requisite for the performance of his Duty, yet God does not upon that account recede from his Right of exacting it; just as a Creditor loses not his Right by his Debtor's being insolvent."

Answ. (1.) Right; God is indebted to no Man, but still he cannot depart from the Rules of Justice and Equity: now neither the one nor the other allows, that a Man should be punished for not performing a Duty, which for want of Ability it was impossible for him to do. Much less, (2.) does Justice allow, that a Duty should be required of him, whom thou thy self hast rendred incapable of performing it.

Fourthly they tell us; "That God in *Adam* gave all Men the Power of believing the Gospel, but when *Adam* sinned they all lost it in him." *Answ.* (1.) We never read in Scripture, that God gave *Adam*, and in him all his Posterity, such a Power, nor does their Divinity tolerate such a Thought: For *Adam* in his State of Innocency was not obliged to believe the Gospel, since such a Faith implies that we are Sinners, freed from Sin by the Grace of God, and restored to the State of Salvation. Is it therefore likely that God should give *Adam* a Power which he didn't want, but deny it to those who wanted it most? This would be contrary to all the Notions of Justice and Equity. (2.) Since *Adam* was necessarily to fall into Sin by the Divine Determination, and his Sin was to be derived to his Posterity, not by a Natural Dependency, but by the Imputation of God alone; then neither he nor his Posterity lost this Power through their own fault, but God by determining the one and imputing Sin to the other, depriv'd them of that Faculty. With what Right then can he require a Duty of them, whom he has rendered incapable of perform-

performing it, by thus taking away their Faculty?
 (2.) God is supposed to have restored the Power to Adam of Believing, when he promis'd, *that the Seed of the Woman should bruise the Serpent's Head*: And if so, with what colour of Justice is it denied to his Posterity, who consented not to his Sin, but were born several Ages after? This would be to grant favour to the Guilty, and to punish the Innocent, which is the highest piece of Injustice.

III. The whole Doctrine of absolute Predestination is highly repugnant to the Sincerity of God: For upon the supposition of Absolute Election and Reprobation, every Action of God with respect to Men, and all the things which he decrees and operates as they regard Men, is rendred a mere Stage-play, and acting the Hypocrite. This more especially appears in the Divine Precepts, Promises and Threatnings, both with respect to the Elect and the Reprobate.

First, with respect to the Elect: (1.) In that he requires Obedience of them as a Duty, which he knew was impossible for them to perform, and which he would work in them by an irresistible Power. (2.) In that he threatens them with Eternal Death if they do not obey, into which it was impossible for them to fall, because he had destinated them to Salvation by an Eternal and Irrevocable Decree. (3.) In that what he works in them by an irresistible Power, he reckons as a Duty performed by them, wherein he is pleased, for which he commends them, and at the end of the World will reward them with Eternal Life. What is all this but mere Farce? Is it not charging the great God of Heaven and Earth with Prevarication, with acting the part of a Stage-player, who represents one thing, but is and MEANS another?

Secondly, with respect to the Reprobate, the Prevarication charged upon God by the Doctrine of Absolute Predestination is much more manifest: (1.) In that God is supposed to prescribe Obedience to those, whom he would not have to be Obedient, and to whom by an Absolute Decree he resolved never to give Power requisite for Obedience. (2.) In that he offers and promises Salvation to those, whom by an absolute and irrevocable Decree he has rejected from

vation. (3.) As a Consequence of these, in that he offers Eternal Life to them under a Condition impossible for them to perform, and which he will never render possible. (4.) In that he intreats, expostulates, and is angry with, and grieves at them, when they discharge not their Duty, tho he is not willing they should perform their Duty, as being born tainted with Original Guilt, by which they are incapable of doing any Duty. (5.) And lastly, in that he condemns them as obstinate and rebellious to Eternal Fire, as the just Punishment of their Rebellion, whom before they were Rebels he appointed to that Misery by his own mere arbitrary Pleasure. If this again be not to charge God with the foulest Dissimulation and Hypocrisy, I know not what is; how then they can clear him of this Imputation by their Doctrine, I cannot imagine: However let us hear what they have to say for themselves in this matter.

*jections
answer'd.*

In the first place then they say; " That God by his Precepts does not declare what he would have Men to do, but only what they are obliged to do; because his true Will is not contain'd in the Divine Commands, but Decrees." *Ans.* (1.) This Exception confirms our Accusation, for who would not conclude but that God wills that which he commands, by annexing the greatest Promises and the severest Threatnings? Or, what greater Evidence can there be of his true Will? When therefore God commands one thing, and really wills the quite contrary, what can be said else than that he prevaricates with Men? (2.) If God wills not that the Reprobates should do what he commands, how can those Men be said not to do his Will who neglect his Precepts? True it is, they do not what God commands, but according to this Opinion they have fulfilled the Will of God. (3.) Nor can the Will of God be the Rule of the Reprobates Duty; not his decreeing Will, for that is secret and lies hid from them; nor his commanding Will, since that is not the true Will of God, but improperly so called, and such as is no Will at all, but with respect to the Elect. (4.) It cannot be infer'd from the Precepts what the Reprobates are bound to do; for were they obliged to do contrary to what God decrees, they

they must be stronger than God, since no Man is obliged to an Impossibility.

Secondly they say, "That God offers Salvation to none unless they believe, but the Reprobate will never believe." *Ans.* (1.) God promises Salvation and Eternal Life to all to whom the Gospel is preach'd. (2.) Nay he offers it to them under the Terms of Faith, invites them to lay hold of the Terms, that thereby they may attain Salvation. (3.) If he did not offer Salvation to the Reprobate, then they could not reject it, for no Man can reject a Benefit that is not offered him; Whereas on the contrary 'tis said in Scripture, that they who do not believe and hearken to the Voice of the Lord, *reject the Counsel of God against themselves*¹; That they *set at nought his Counsel*²; That they *would not be gather'd together when God would have gathered them*³; That they did not receive our Saviour, *when he came to them as to his own*⁴; That they *would not have him to reign over them*⁵; And that they *rejected the Word of God, and judg'd themselves unworthy of everlasting Life*⁶. In a word, the Scripture stiles those who perish, not only *Rebels*, but also *Fools*⁷: now he is not a Fool that rejects a Good that is not offered him.

Thirdly they object, "That no Promises of Eternal Life are made to the Reprobate; but when God declares to them, [*Repent and be converted that your Sins may be blotted out, or, he that believes shall be saved*] these are not Divine Promises of Eternal Life, but only so many bare Intimations, where- by God signifies that according to his Decree Remission of Sins is annexed to Repentance, and Faith in Christ Jesus to Eternal Life." *Ans.* Either this Objection is very trifling, or else reflects upon the Promises of God. (1.) It is trifling, since such Propositions, wherein Salvation is declared to be joined with Faith, being pronounc'd by the supreme Law-

¹ Mar. 16. 16. Joh. 3. 16. ² Luk. 7. 30. ³ Prov. 1. 25.
⁴ Mat. 23. 37. ⁵ Joh. 1. 11. ⁶ Luk. 19. 27. ⁷ Acts 13.
 46. ⁸ Prov. 1. 22, 24, 25. Jer. 4. 22. & 8. 9. Hos. 7. 11.
 Mat. 7. 26.

giver who prescribes Faith and Obedience, are real Promises, and equivalent to this, Believe, and I will bestow upon thee Everlasting Life. (2.) But if they will not allow of this, then their Objection is a Reflection cast upon the Promises of God; for it supposes that he inviting Men to Faith, by the Promise of Eternal Life, only barely asserts what Connection there is between Faith and Salvation; and because he will not bestow Faith upon them, does really deny Salvation to them, to whom he offers it in his Word, which is certainly far from Sincerity. (3.) From hence, as well as from the foregoing Objections, it will follow, that the Gospel is preach'd to the Reprobate not for their Benefit, but to their Disadvantage; which is to transform the Word of Life and Salvation into the Word of Death and Damnation.

Fourthly, they tell us, "That the Reprobates are not in themselves the Object of the Heavenly Call, but only by accident, as they are mix'd with the Elect." *Ans.* (1.) This is to call in question all manner of certainty about the Divine Call; for how can any Man at this rate be certain whether the Gospel he hears preach'd calls upon him, since for ought he knows he has the Call given him by accident only as he is mix'd with the Elect? (2.) If the Promises of God belong not to the Reprobates, then neither the Precepts, since (by their own Confession) there is a necessary and inviolable Connexion betwixt these two; therefore they can neither reject the Precepts, nor by rejecting them become disobedient.

Fifthly, they say, "That the Ministers who preach the Gospel may indeed propose Salvation to the Reprobate, but God does no such thing, 'tis only to the Elect he offers it." *Ans.* What a wretched Evasion is this? Do not the Ministers act in God's stead? Are they not his Ambassadors set apart, and sent on purpose to announce his Will to all the World? Is not what they say, when they invite Men to Faith and Repentance upon the Promises of Eternal Life, as valid as if God had said it, especially when they declare nothing but what is consonant to his Will? Certainly the Scripture would set them right, would they but peruse it with unprejudiced Minds,
and

and unbiass'd Affections. But not to insist on any other Objections, the Answers already given might be enough to put any Reform'd Divine to the blush, and to be ashamed of a Doctrine which cast such Reflections on the Sincerity of God, and which they cannot maintain without offering violence to their Faculties, wresting the Scriptures, and winding themselves every day into more Difficulties and intricate Mazes than ever.

IV. To proceed, This Decree cannot be reconcil'd with the Divine Wisdom, because it introduces God as expecting what he never would have come to pass, nor can come to pass, *viz.* the Conversion of the Reprobate; and prescribing under the Promise of Eternal Life what himself would do, and which unless he did it could never be done, *viz.* Faith and Obedience in the Elect. Which are very repugnant to all the Notions we have of Wisdom. 4. To his Wisdom.

V. Lastly, and above all, this Absolute Decree of Reprobation is inconsistent with the Love of God, or the Divine Philanthropy so much magnified in Scripture, which represents God, especially as reconcil'd to us in Christ Jesus, as a tender and compassionate, as a gracious and merciful Father; as a universal Friend to Mankind, and a passionate Lover of Souls. But this Doctrine (take it in the *Supralapsarians* or *Sublapsarians* sense, 'tis all one) dresses him up in the most hideous Form, represents him as a wilful, cruel, revengeful, and inexorable Being; one who acts towards his rational Creatures, the greatest Part of them at least, with implacable Rage and boundless Hatred: One whose Cruelty and Tyranny surpasses that of the most inhuman and cruel Tyrants: One who damns Men by an Absolute Decree before they are created, or creates them on purpose to damn them: One who destines Men to Sin and Destruction, and precludes them from all Hopes and Means of bettering their Condition, and then consigns them over to Everlasting Misery for what they could not help nor avoid: One who sports himself at our Unhappiness, and triumphs in our Fall: In a word, One who wreaks his Vengeance, and darts his Thunderbolts all around without distinction, sparing but a few whom he fondly, and for no reason, 5. To his Love.

reason, but out of a Humour loves, whilst he casts the rest with a revengeful Hand into Everlasting Fire, not only Men of all Sorts and Conditions, Families and Tribes, Nations and Countries; but (what is horrid to think on) even some of those helpless innocent Babes, born both of Pagan and Christian Parents, who die before they have known the Difference of Good and Evil, much less acted either. Whether this be not to represent God more like a Ghastly Spectre, a Frightful Monster, or some Fell Fury, than a God of Mercy and a Father of Comfort; and whether these be not some of the fatal, but natural Consequences of the Absolute *Predestinarians* Doctrine, we leave the World, nay themselves to judg.

S E C T. VI.

A Reply to some Places of Scripture, usually urg'd in defence of Absolute Predestination.

the vari-
ous Classes
of their Ar-
guments.

It now remains that we should examine the principal Arguments usually made use of to support the Doctrine of Absolute Predestination; which Arguments, that we may avoid Confusion, may be reduc'd under two General Heads: First, such whereby they endeavour to defend Absolute Election; and Secondly, such as they produce to support their Doctrine of Absolute Reprobation.

Again, the former sort may be divided into several distinct Classes: The first containing such Places wherein mention is made of Election, of electing a few, and of some ordain'd to Eternal Life: The Second, those Places wherein the Cause of Election is said to be the Good-Pleasure and Purpose of God, the Counsel of his Will, the Grace and Mercy of God: The Third, such Places wherein all the other Divine and Gracious Acts seem to be subordinate to the Election, or τῇ προνοίᾳ, of God, as the first Act preceding all the rest.

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sort.

As to the first Rank or Class of Arguments, we think fit to premise, that 'tis a very weak sort of arguing from the bare Word *Election*, or *Elect*, to infer such an Absolute and Eternal Election to Salvation, without

without any regard had to Faith. For it should have been first prov'd that the Word *Election* is taken in no other Sense in Scripture. Whereas when we come to treat of the actual Election of the Faithful (*Book VI.*) as a Promise of the New Testament, we will there produce the various Acceptations of that Word, by which it will appear that it is no where in Scripture to be met with in that Sense which they pretend. It will be enough at present to shew as much with respect to those Places which they usually object against us.

The first Text of this Class, is *Mat. 20. 16.* *So the last shall be first, and the first last; for many be call'd, but few chosen:* Which last Words are likewise to be met with *Ch. 22. V. 14.* But from the Words in either Chapter cannot any thing be concluded in favour of Absolute Election. For in *Ch. 20.* as is manifest by the foregoing Parable, by the Chosen are understood those who were last call'd at the eleventh Hour of the Day, and after working one Hour receiv'd a Reward equal with those who had born the Heat and Burden of the Day. These *Elect* or *Chosen* are not therefore oppos'd to others who were excluded from receiving the Reward, which must have been, had the Place been meant of the Decree of Predestination; but to those who were made equal to them in the Reward, tho they had born the greatest Burden and the Heat of the Day: Nor is Election said to precede the Performance of the Duty, but to follow it, when the Day's Work was over. They are then call'd *Elect* or *Chosen*, upon the account of that Prerogative whereby the Lord was pleas'd to make them, who were last, equal to the first.

As to the other Place, viz. *Mat. 22. 14.* it is likewise the Conclusion of another Parable: But that it relates not to such an Absolute Election, whereby those *Elect* are oppos'd to the *Called*, who are call'd with an inefficacious Call by the External Word only, and yet are irrevocably reprobated by God, appears from the Parable it self, and the whole Scope of it. For herein our Saviour design'd to represent the Divine Goodness and Beneficence towards the *Jews*, and their wilful Rebellion and Obstinacy towards God, as the true

true and proper Cause of their Rejection: Which would have been of no force upon the supposition of an Absolute Decree of Election and Reprobation. From the Intention then of the foregoing Parable it must be said, that by the *Called* we are to understand those who did not hearken to the Call of God; or tho they did profess in some measure an External Obedience, and by this means would be reckon'd among the Number of the Faithful, yet were devoid of true Faith and Uprightness of Mind: But by the *Elect* or *Chosen*, those who obeyed the Call of God; and are therefore taken out of, and elected from the rest, that they may be Partakers of the Marriage-Feast, *i. e.* of Everlasting Life.

ph. 1. 4. The third Place is Eph. 1. 4. *According as he hath plain'd. chosen us in him, before the Foundation of the World, that we should be Holy and without Blame before him in Love.* In which place, say they, Election is not only said to be made before the Foundation of the World, but also that Faith and Obedience is the Fruit of it, and therefore consequently cannot be a Condition that precedes it. *Ans.* This is the only Text which mentions Election before the Foundation of the World; whereas in all other Places, wherein that Word is us'd, is understood the Divine Act whereby God makes a Discrimination between Men in TIME. Election therefore in this Place does not denote properly Election to Glory, but Election, or rather the Decree of Election to Grace; for by it we are chosen to be Holy and Faithful, God decreeing before the Foundation of the World to elect us in Christ, *i. e.* to call us to Faith and Holiness of Life, and by this means to the participation of all Spiritual and Heavenly Blessings. That this Text is thus to be understood, appears from hence: (1.) Because this Election is said to be made *in Christ*; but the Absolute Election they talk of cannot be said to be made in Christ, because it preceded the Decree of sending Christ into the World, according to the Opinion of those Men against whom we argue. For (say they) God does not elect Men because he considers them as deliver'd by Christ, but because he has elected them, therefore he decrees Christ to be their Mediator. (2.) If the Apostle here meant Election to Glory,

Glory, it will follow that GLORY is the MEANS to GRACE; for if God has elected us to Glory, to the end that we might be Holy, it follows that Holiness, which is us'd to be denoted by the word Grace, is the END with respect to Glory; which is highly absurd. From these Reasons we conclude that our Interpretation of the Words seems to be the most genuine, and suitable to St. Paul's whole Discourse throughout this Chapter.

But to this they object, "That Election to Grace, such as we maintain, does not certainly bring along with it a Spiritual Life: Now Election in this Place is supposed to be of the same Latitude with the Blessing of God, *V. 3.* He hath blessed us, as, or according as he hath chosen us: It ought therefore to comprehend the Blessing of Faith, and a Spiritual Life communicated by the Grace of God." *Answ.*

*An Object
on answer
ed.*

There is no Consequence at all in this Argument: The Apostle thanks God for Election, and for all the Blessings flowing thence upon those who submit to this Divine Election: But does it follow that those Blessings are of the same Latitude with the Divine Election? No; it may more justly be infer'd, that those Blessings shall be the Portion of none besides the Elect, because they flow from Election.

The fourth Text is Acts 13. 48. *And as many as Acts 13 were ordain'd to Eternal Life, believed.* Now here again, say they, it is not only said that some were ordain'd to Eternal Life, but likewise that this Ordination preceded their Faith. *Answ.* (1.) Here they are not said to be preordain'd, much less by God, but only *τεταγμένοι*, ordain'd to Eternal Life: Now that by the Ordain'd we are not to understand those who are absolutely elected to Eternal Life, is manifest from hence, because it would then follow, That they who did not believe, were reprobated by God from all Eternity: That St. Paul and Luke the Evangelist not only knew this, but also were willing it should be known to all Men, and therefore committed it to Writing: All which is very absurd. But (2.) the whole Context does not admit us by the *Ordained* to understand the absolutely Elect to Eternal Life. For St. Paul turns himself from the *Jews to the Gentiles*, because those

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rejected the Word of God, and judged themselves unworthy of Eternal Life: And then 'tis added, that of the Gentiles as many as were ordained to Eternal Life, believed. For if by the Ordained we understand the absolutely Elected to Eternal Life, this would not have been a Reason of his turning from the Jews to the Gentiles, upon the account of their rejecting the Word of God; since the Jews therefore rejected it, because they were not elected to Eternal Life: But whoever of the Gentiles were not elected, likewise rejected the Gospel. What was the occasion then of St. Paul's turning from the Jews to the Gentiles? And why was not the Infidelity of those among the Gentiles, who were not elected to Eternal Life, as good a Reason for his returning from them to the Jews, since whoever among the Jews were elected did believe, as well as the Elect among the Gentiles? If it be ask'd what is the true Meaning of this Text; I reply, That some Words, which seem Passive in the Hebrew Tongue, whose Propriety the Evangelists and Apostles' very frequently follow, are not Passive but Active, and signify an immanent and reciprocal Action. According to this Remark, the *τεταγμένοι*, or *ordained to Eternal Life*, will be those, who by the Assistance of the preventing Grace of God have dispos'd themselves for the embracing Eternal Life; under what Terms soever it be proposed to them by God. And in this sense the *τεταγμένοι*, Ordain'd, are very elegantly oppos'd to the Unbelieving Jews, who judg'd themselves unworthy of Eternal Life. I know of but one thing that may be objected to this Interpretation, viz. that if it be admitted, then some previous Dispositions in Men are to be admitted antecedent to Faith. But this is so clear, that the Scripture it self teaches it in several Places². Thus, *He that doeth Truth, cometh to the Light, that his Deeds may be made manifest that they are wrought in God*: Again, *If any Man will do his Will, he shall know of the Doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether*

¹ As Rom. 10. 3. Heb. 12. 9. Jam. 4. 7. 1 Pet. 5. 5, 6. Eph. 4. 21, 24. Coloss. 3. 18. Tit. 2. 5, 9. & 3. 1. ² Joh. 3. 21. & 7. 17. & 8. 47.

I speak of my self: And again, He that is of God, heareth God's Words; ye therefore hear them not, because ye are not of God.

The second Class of Arguments to be consider'd by *The second Class of* us, is that which contains those Places wherein mention *Argument* is made of *the Good-Pleasure, the Counsel of the Will, the Purpose of God,* with the like. But here again we premise, that it is a weak way of arguing to infer any thing from these Words only, in favour of the Absolute Election of some few, unless it could be prov'd from those Places that God according to the Counsel of his Will had elected some Men especially to Eternal Salvation, without any regard to their Faith or Works; which certainly cannot be done, since not in any one of these Texts is there the least sign of any such Election; as we will now evince more particularly.

The first Text is Mat. II. 25, 26. *I thank thee, O Father, Lord of Heaven and Earth, because thou hast hid those things from the Wise and Prudent, and hast reveal'd them unto Babes: Even so Father, for so it seemed good in thy sight.* *Mat. II 25, 26. explain'd.* Answ. There is nothing in this Text that does in the least imply any such Absolute Election; much less can any solid Argument be deduc'd from thence in its Defence. This Place admits of a twofold Interpretation. The first is, That our Saviour having an eye to the Mission of the Apostles, described in the foregoing Chapter, thanks God for that he had not committed the Doctrine of Salvation to wise Men endued with the Learning of this World, by whose Ministry he would call Men to Salvation and bring them to the Faith: But to Babes, *i. e.* to illiterate Persons, void like Children of Wisdom and Learning; since the Glory of God was most conspicuous, in enduing such illiterate Men with so sublime a Knowledg, and rendring them capable of so difficult an Undertaking. The second Interpretation is, that the Wise and Prudent should signify those who are puffed with the vain Conceit of their Wisdom and Understanding; and Babes, Men that are humble and teachable like Children: And then the Meaning of the Words is this; That our Saviour, reflecting upon the Infidelity of the Inhabitants of *Chorazin* and *Bethsaida*, thanks his Father for having so contrived his

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Heavenly Doctrine, that it should not be suitable to the Proud and Haughty, but to the Humble : Because it has no regard to the Good things or Wisdom of this World, but commands us to deny these, and to pursue the future invisible Blessings of Heaven, from whence it seems to be Foolishness in the Eyes of worldly Men. Hence it is that this Doctrine is hid from the Wise, because they will not believe it ; but reveal'd to the humble in Heart, that is, was so suitable to their Minds, that they readily hearkened to it. Take the Words then in which sense you please, in both the Good-Will of God must be acknowledg'd as the Cause of the Divine Action ; but in neither Sense is there any thing in favour of Absolute Election.

uke 12. A second Place is Luk. 12. 32. *Fear not, little Flock, for it is your Father's Good-Pleasure to give you the Kingdom.* Answ. There is not in this place any thing to be met with to countenance the Decree of Absolute Election ; since our Lord by *little Flock* means his Disciples, which cleaved to him, and were but few in number. He calls God their Father, therefore he considers them as ingrafted into himself by Faith, for by Faith it is that we are the Sons of God*. The Design of our Saviour is to dissuade his Disciples from a needless Solitude and Care for the things of this Life, not only because their Heavenly Father careth for them, but also because all those things should be added by way of Surplusage to them who seek first the Kingdom of God and the Righteousness thereof : And then he adds, *Fear not little Flock*, that is, be not anxiously careful for the future things of this Life, *for it is your Father's Good Pleasure to give you the Kingdom*, viz. that of God. Now what is there in all this that has any thing in favour of the Absolute Election of some, without any respect had to Faith?

2 Tim. 1. The third Text under this Class, is 2 Tim. 1. 9, 10. *Who hath saved us, and called us with an Holy Calling, not according to our Works, but according to his own Purpose and Grace which was given us in Christ Jesus before the World began, but is now made manifest by the ap-*

pearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ, &c. *Answ.* There is nothing here from whence it may with any Probability be infer'd, that we are to understand the Divine Purpose of some Persons to be saved or elected to Salvation, without any regard had to Faith: But the Purpose of God here treated of, is evidently That, whereby he resolv'd before the World began to call Men to the Faith, and place them in a State of Salvation. The Apostle says that this Calling proceeded from God, not according to our Works; that is, he was not moved thereto by the Merit of our Works, since we were all Sinners subject to the Divine Wrath and Condemnation; but according to his own Purpose and Grace. Now tho God in this his gracious Call to Salvation had no regard to our Works, yet would he not bestow it even on those who were called, but upon the account of their Faith and Regeneration.

A fourth Place is *Rom. 9. 11.* But since this is usually alledg'd not only in defence of the Decree of Absolute Election, but also of Reprobation; and since the main stress of their whole Cause depends upon that Text, we will consider it in a Section apart; and shall now proceed to consider

The third Class of Arguments; and the first and principal Place is *Rom. 8. 28, 29, 30.* *And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the Called according to his purpose. For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conform'd to the Image of his Son, that he might be the first-born among many Brethren. Moreover, whom he did predestinate, them he also called; and whom he called, them he also justified; and whom he justified, them he also glorified.* Here, say they, is the golden Chain of Salvation, each of whose Links is so fasten'd to the other, that whoever is Partaker of the one, must be Partaker of all the rest: And since the uppermost Link is the *foreknowledge* or Foreknowledg of God, or his Decree, from thence is derived by a necessary Connection all the other comfortable Blessings, together with Salvation it self.

Answ. To give a full Reply to this Objection, and clear up the Words of this Text, it will not be amiss to enquire in the first place what was the Apostle's

Scope and Intention therein. From the whole Chapter his Design appears to be nothing else, but to comfort the Faithful under the most grievous Persecutions, which they suffered for the sake of the Gospel; and that for this Reason, because if we suffer with Christ we shall also partake with him of the Heavenly Glory; which Reason he prosecutes at large from the 17th to the 28th Verse. In these and the following Words, for a farther Consolation of the Faithful under Persecutions, he teaches them, that these Afflictions would be so far from a Hindrance, that they would be a Furtherance to their Salvation, and shews by what Methods and by what Steps they should through them attain to Salvation.

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From the Design of the Chapter thus cleared up, 'tis easy to give a fair Solution of the Words so much insisted upon by the absolute *Predestinarians*. For, (1.) From hence it appears; that the Subject of which the Apostle here speaks, are those who love God, and to whom all the other things which follow are to be applied. Now the Lovers of God are they who keep his Commandments, *the Called according to his Purpose*, the Christian Believers, who live according to the Gospel Rule, and seek not for Righteousness according to the Works of the Law. (2.) To them he says, *All things*, not their Sins (as some pretend) but their Sufferings and Persecutions, *should work together for good*; because by them they should not become miserable, as the World perversely supposed, but be prepared to Salvation; by which, as by so many Degrees, they should ascend to it. (3.) This Assertion the Apostle proves by adding this Reason, *For whom he did foreknow, them he also did predestinate, to be conformed to the Image of his Son*, &c. By which 'tis plain none others are meant by those *whom he foreknew*, than they who love God, being called according to his Purpose. Now this Fore-knowledg does not denote a bare Knowledg, but also the Approbation of God, as is plain from Scripture²; from whence it follows that to foreknow signifies the Decree of God,

¹ Joh. 14. 21. 1 Joh. 5. 3. ² Psal. 1. 6. 2 Tim. 2. 19.

whereby

whereby he resolved to love and approve of those, who according to his Calling through Christ love him; for as he actually loves and approves of none but them who love him, so he has decreed to love and approve of none else. If we take those whom God foreknows in this Sense, the Context will be clear, and runs thus: "All things, *i. e.* all Adversities and Afflictions, *work together for good to them that love God*; for these Faithful whom God foreknew, or decreed to love, *them he also predestinated to be conformed to the Image of his Son*, *i. e.* that they should arrive to Salvation by the way of the Cross, after the Example of his Son; for this Conformity consists not only in the Glory which the Faithful shall hereafter enjoy with Christ, but also in the Way that leads thereto'. (4.) The Apostle adds, *whom he did predestinate, them he also called*: Where, by the Connection, it is plain that he still speaks of the same Predestination, *viz.* that of the Faithful to Salvation by the Cross and Afflictions, after the example of Christ: From whence also it appears, that the Calling ought to be taken in the same Sense, not of the first Calling of Men to the Faith, but of calling the Faithful to the Cross, whereby God in his time calls the Faithful to suffer, and to which they ought to submit with a chearful Mind, and not be diverted by it from a constant Profession of Faith. (5.) It follows, *whom he called, them he also justified*, or rather will justify, the past time being used for the future, thereby to shew the greater certainty of it, (as is the meaning of the next Words) *and whom he justified, them he also glorified*: That is, God will bestow upon them Remission of Sins, and destine the Reward of Eternal Life to them as being just; and them being justified will he also glorify, and at last crown with the Reward appointed to them. Thus we see how this Interpretation is very agreeable to the Apostle's Design and Intention.

But now if by the Fore-knowledg and Predestination of God we should understand, that eternal, absolute and immutable Election of certain Men to

The per-verse Ex-plication of them refuted.

Salvation ; and by Calling that efficacious one to Faith, by which the Called are necessarily inclined to it ; no reason of Comfort under Afflictions can be raised from these Words : for it does not follow that all Adversities will tend to the good of those who love God, because he has irrevocably elected some certain Persons to Salvation according to his absolute Purpose, without any regard had to their Faith, and in time calls them so effectually as to work Faith in them by an irresistible Power, for this has nothing at all to do with Afflictions. Nor does it follow, because whom God has justified them he also glorified, that the justified should persevere, and never swerve from the Faith and Love of God to their Lives end ; for this is said of them only so far as they love God : But if they should happen to fail in Persecutions, as they deny God, so also will he deny them :

Joh. 6. 37. explained. The second place is Joh. 6. 37. *All that the Father giveth me shall come to me, and him that cometh unto me I will in no wise cast out.* Here the giving of the Father is said to be an Act antecedent to Faith. *Ans.* We freely own it, but the Query is, what this Gift of the Father is ? That it is not the Eternal Absolute Election to Salvation, or any thing flowing from it, appears from hence : For by this means our Saviour, whose Speech is exclusive, would not only have mitigated, but also quite taken away the *Jews* fault, for not believing in him ; viz. because they were not given, i. e. elected by the Father to Salvation, nor endued with that converting Grace, which is the Fruit of Election, and which it is not in any Man's power to bestow upon himself. Something else then must be understood by this giving of the Father, viz. a giving with Energy and Efficacy ; and who they are that are thus given by the Father to Christ, the Scripture elsewhere informs us : Not those who are elected to Salvation by an eternal, absolute and immutable Decree, for the Scripture no where speaks of such an Election ; but they who are prepared by the Father with the Assistance of the more general

Grace, for the embracing Faith in Christ whenever preached unto them; for tho the Father sent Christ to publish the Doctrine of Salvation to all Men, and to bestow sufficient Strength on all for believing in him, yet he is more especially said to give them to Christ, who are thus dispos'd, since such are really converted by the Word, and come to Christ, or believe in him.

The third Text is Mat. 13. 11. *It is given unto you* Mat. 11. *to know the Mysteries of the Kingdom of Heaven, but to them it is not given.* *11. explain'd.* Answ. Before any thing can be concluded from this place in favour of Absolute Election, they ought to prove that this Gift is the Effect of such an Election. Now the contrary to this appears, (1.) Because then it should be said, that Christ by this Expression declar'd to all his Disciples, that they were elected, and therefore God had bestowed upon them the means of Faith, whereas there was a *Judas* among them. (2.) That the rest were reprobated, which is by no means likely, since some thousands of the *Jews* afterwards believed; unless any one dare affirm, that among so many there was not one of the Faithful to be found. The meaning therefore of this place is, To you my Disciples it is given to know the Mysteries of the Kingdom of Heaven, but to those wicked Hearers of my Words it is not given; 'tis not upon yours, but their account that I speak in Parables; but what I obscurely propose to them, God is pleas'd I should clearly make known to you.

S E C T. VII.

The NINTH Chapter of the Epistle to the ROMANS explained.

The Absolute Predestinarians urge in their behalf *The tri* several Passages out of Rom. 2. particularly ver. 11, 12, *Scope of this Ch.* 13. *For the Children being not yet born, neither having* *ser.* *done any good or evil, that the Purpose of God according to Election might stand, not of Works, but of him that calleth, it was said unto her, The Elder shall serve the Younger; as it is written, Jacob have I loved, but Esau have*

have I hated: So likewise ver. 18, 21, &c. *Ans.* That we may come to a right understanding of these Words, it is proper in the first place to enquire into the Scope of the Apostle, and the End he proposes to himself in the whole Chapter. In the foregoing Chapter St. Paul had very largely proved both against the *Jews* and *Gentiles*, that no Man is justified by the Works of the Law, but by Faith in Christ Jesus; that this Faith was revealed by God without respect of Persons to all Men, both *Jews* and *Gentiles*; so that not only the *Gentiles* by transgressing the Law of Nature, but the *Jews* by transgressing that of *Moses*, were become guilty of Condemnation and the Divine Wrath, from which they could not be freed by the Law, but only by the Application of a new and particular Grace of God in Christ Jesus. From hence it follow'd, that the *Jews* look'd upon it as a great Absurdity for the Apostle to say, that the *Jews* who sought for Righteousness by the Law, and rejected Faith in Christ, are no longer in Covenant with God, nor are saved; whereas the *Gentiles* who adhered to God by Faith in Christ, are admitted into the Covenant, and destin'd to Salvation. The Apostle allows of that Inference in this Chapter, and shews that there is nothing of Absurdity therein.

Error But the *Contra-Remonstrants* maintain that the Apostle
thens here ascends higher back than before, viz. to enquire
t it into the Causes of Faith and Infidelity, and to inform
ted, us to whom God was pleased to grant Faith by virtue
the of his Absolute Decree, viz. to a few *Jews* and a
ning great many *Gentiles*, whom he had elected to Salva-
cloje tion from all Eternity, according to the Purpose of his
he Will; the greatest part of the *Jews* being rejected,
pter. to whom it was therefore necessary that they should
 not be converted to the Faith, but be hardened in
 their Unbelief. But these Men are egregiously mista-
 ken, and quite misapprehend the drift of the Apostle,
 as appears both from the beginning and end of this
 Chapter. (1.) In the beginning of the Chapter
 St. Paul by a solemn Protestation not only declares
 his great Heaviness and continual Sorrow of Heart,
 but likewise wishes that himself were accursed for his
 Brethren according to the Flesh. Now this is not
 agree-

agreeable to an Apostle, to grieve and wish to be accursed, that the irrevocable Decree of God, wherein he is supposed to have manifested his Glory, might be revoked and rendred of none effect. (2.) In the end of the Chapter, *ver. 30, 31, &c.* the Apostle saith, *What shall we say then? that the Gentiles which followed not after Righteousness have attained to Righteousness, even the Righteousness which is of Faith; but Israel which followed after the Law of Righteousness, hath not attained to the Law of Righteousness: Wherefore? because they sought it not by Faith, but as it were by the Works of the Law, for they stumbled at the stumbling Stone, &c.* All which being an Inference drawn from what went before, represents to us the Scope of the Apostle's Discourse to be nothing else than this, that God who rejected the *Jews* upon the account of their following after Righteousness by the Law, took into their place the *Gentiles* who believ'd in Jesus Christ. And if we but duly mind this Intention and Scope of the Apostle, all the Passages in this whole Chapter will be easy and have no difficulty in them.

The Apostle begins with answering an Objection, *Ver. 6,* started against his Doctrine as very absurd: "If 8, 9. explained.
 " God upon rejecting the *Jews* who sought after Righteousness by the Law, admitted the *Gentiles* who
 " believed in Christ into their place; then the Word
 " of God is of none effect, whereby in entring into
 " Covenant with *Abraham*, he promised that Patri-
 " arch to be the God of him and his Posterity". To
 take off this Objection, the Apostle says, that God by this Promise did not oblige himself to the carnal Posterity of *Abraham*, as if all who are born of him after the Flesh were comprehended within this Promise: But that he reserved to himself a Right of declaring at any time, whom he would have to be looked upon for the blessed Seed of *Abraham*, to whom he designed his Promises; and so God might without any breach of Promise, upon rejecting the unbelieving *Jews*, reckon the believing *Gentiles* as the Seed of *Abraham*, whom he would bless. And that the *Jews* might not look upon this as absurd, he shews that God at the very first made such a Distinction and Declaration in the very Family of *Abraham*; for tho *Ismael* was the first-born, and by right

right of Primogeniture according to carnal Generation was entitled to the Possession of *Canaan*, and the Inheritance of the Divine Blessings; yet God would not own him for the promised Seed, but made his Covenant in *Isaac* and his Posterity, in whom peculiarly all the Families of the Earth should be blessed. And lest some should except against this Instance of *Ismael*, as not being full to the purpose, he being the Son of a Handmaid, whilst *Isaac* was begotten of a lawful Wife, the Apostle adds, in the Words mentioned in the beginning of this Section, another Instance in the Family of *Isaac*.

r. 10, 12, 13. That Patriarch had by his Wife *Rebekah* two Sons at a Birth, *Esau* the elder and *Jacob* the younger. If the Prerogative of carnal Generation had been of any avail with God, then *Esau* certainly would have been prefer'd before *Jacob*, to whom and to whose Seed the Possession of the promised Land should have been given; but the quite contrary came to pass, for *Esau* and his Posterity being rejected, God designed the Possession of *Canaan* to *Jacob* and his Seed: This is what is here said, *That the Purpose of God according to Election might stand, not of Works but of him that calleth, it was said unto her, The Elder shall serve the Younger*. Some perhaps might think, that it is no wonder that *Esau* a profane Person was passed by, since he deserved for his Impiety not to be esteemed by God, tho he were the first-born. To obviate this, and to shew that the whole proceeded from the mere good Pleasure of God, the Apostle says, that this Declaration was made before *Esau* and *Jacob* were born, and had done any good or evil. This Purpose then of God is not that Eternal Decree, whereby he elected some Men to Eternal Life, and passed by or reprobated others from it, without any regard to the Faith or Obedience of the one, and to the Infidelity and Disobedience of the other: But 'tis that purpose which God made with Election and some sort of Discrimination, whereby he reserved to himself the free choice of esteeming at all times whom and what sort of Persons he pleased, as the Seed of *Abraham*, to whom the Blessing should belong. This he shewed formerly in the Instances of *Ismael* and *Isaac*, and of *Esau* and *Jacob*,

Jacob, and demonstrates the same again under the Gospel; in that he does not look upon those who sprang from *Abraham* according to the Flesh, but his Spiritual Posterity who walk in the Steps of faithful *Abraham*, as the Seed to whom the promised Blessing belongs. This Interpretation is justified by the Examples of *Esau* and *Jacob*, and the Prophecy foretold concerning them, *The elder shall serve the younger*; which Prophecy has nothing to do with the Eternal Election of the one, nor with the Absolute Reprobation of the other, it only relates to Temporal and Earthly things, and concerns rather the Posterity than the Persons of *Esau* and *Jacob*; the one designed to enjoy the promised Land and all the Temporal Blessings annexed to it, with a Superiority over the Descendants of the elder Branch of *Isaac's* Family; and the other excluded from that Land, enjoying fewer Privileges and Blessings, and being subject to the younger Branch of the Family. The same thing is likewise evinc'd by the Words which follow, *As it is written, Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated*. Which Words are not so to be connected with the precedent, as if spoken at the same time, for they were uttered by *Malachi* several Ages after *Esau* and *Jacob's* Death: But God by this Saying, *The elder shall serve the younger*, was pleased to signify the same thing which afterwards was uttered by *Malachi*, *Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated*. For the word *Hatred* does not denote such an *Absolute Hatred*, whereby God rejected *Esau* from himself to everlasting Destruction; since by this means all the Posterity of *Esau* would have been reprobated too, which is absurd: But a *Comparative Hatred*, by which God is said to have hated *Esau*, because he loved him with a lesser degree of Love than he did *Jacob*.

Having cleared these Points, it is now easy to give *Other* a Solution of the others which are produced in this *Chapter*, and to shew that they make nothing at all for *this* the Doctrine of absolute Predestination. We shall *not* run thro the whole, since that has been done *plainly* by others, but shall take notice only of some Passages *Ver* which are constantly in the mouths of the Maintainers of Absolute Predestination. They object then, *ver. 16. It is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth,*
but

but of God that sheweth Mercy. Answ. 'Tis plain from what has been already said that this does not relate to Election to Eternal Life; as if it availed nothing thereto, whether we will rightly perform our Duty punctually, and run chearfully and diligently in the way of Good Works or not: Nor are we to understand by Will in this place, that whereby a Man wills and does what God requires of him, for this the Scripture ' expressly tells us is his Duty: But the whole Passage relates to Election to Grace, and by the Will of Man we are to understand his Will as it precedes the Divine Call. As if the Apostle should have said, It is not for Man to make choice of the Ways and Means of attaining the Favour and Blessings of God: But it belongs to God, who as he bestows his Blessings upon Men at pleasure, so likewise prescribes the Means of attaining them by his mere Will, without which Declaration all the Labour of Man in prescribing to himself a Law, would have been in vain and to no purpose.

18. It follows, Ver. 18. *Therefore hath he Mercy on whom he will have Mercy, and whom he will he hardeneth.* This is a plain Inference from what was said before: and the true Meaning of it is, *God has Mercy*, that is, offers the Benefits of his Grace to whomsoever, and under what Conditions soever he pleases; so that he is tied up to no Nation, nor to any Generation of Men according to the Flesh, nor has he any regard to the Methods whereby they endeavour to obtain his Favour, unless they be according to his Will. *And whom he will he hardens*; that is, he can at pleasure justly punish those Sinners who obstinately reject his Grace, tho' they should shew a great Zeal for the Divine Law, which he now has declar'd not to be the Means of attaining Righteousness and Salvation: And he may permit them, upon the Abuse of his Long-suffering and Patience, at last to be 'harden'd. Not that he works this Hardness in them, but by their Wickedness they themselves turn all those gracious Methods, which

in their own nature tend to the softning of their Hearts, into so many Occasions of Hardness and Obduracy.

Against this Doctrine the Apostle introduces an Un-ver. believing Jew making this Objection; Ver. 19. *Why doth he yet find fault? For who hath resisted his Will?* The Meaning of which Objection is this: "If God will
" harden us, that he may afterwards punish us the
" more severely, and by our Punishment, as formerly
" by *Pharaoh's*, manifest his Glory, he has no reason
" to find fault with us: For we are not stronger than
" God, that we should resist his Will, or hinder what
" he has decreed with respect to us. If he has de-
" creed to harden us, 'tis impossible but we must be
" harden'd." To this foolish Objection the Apostle re-
plies with Indignation; Ver. 20. *Nay but, O Man, who art thou that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, Why hast thou made me thus?* By which Answer he shews that the Jews had no reason to take exception at what he taught, viz. That God, rejecting the unbelieving Jews who sought after Righteousness by the Works of the Law, elected the Gentiles, who believed in Christ and followed after the Righteousness which is of Faith. He likewise shews that their Objection was as idle, and as unreasonable, as if a Creature should expostulate with his Creator for not making him more excellent than he was. This Answer he illustrates by a very proper Similitude, Ver. 21. *Hath not the Potter power over the Clay, of the same Lump to make one Vessel to Honour, and another to Dishonour?* By which he shews, that God has no less a Right of declaring whom he will esteem as in Covenant with himself, and on whom he will bestow Salvation; or in other words, That he has no less a Right of rejecting the unbelieving Jews, and taking the believing Gentiles into Covenant, and granting to them Eternal Life, than a Potter has over his Clay, of the same Lump to make one Vessel to Honour, that is to honourable Uses, and another to Dishonour or dishonourable Uses. Only this Difference there is in the Similitude; the Potter himself makes both sort of Vessels, but God prescribing to Men a Condition, by the Observation of which they may become

become Vessels to Honour, and by the rejecting thereof become Vessels to Dishonour, and offering to them Grace by the Assistance of which they may perform the Condition, has plac'd it in their power to become either the one or the other; that they might attribute Salvation to the Divine Grace, but impute their Destruction to themselves and their own Obstinacy. The Apostle proceeds, Ver. 22, 23. *What if God willing to shew his Wrath, and to make his Power known, endured with much Long-suffering the Vessels of Wrath fitted to Destruction: And that he might make known the Riches of his Glory on the Vessels of Mercy, which he had afore prepared unto Glory?* Whether we take these Words as an Application of the Similitude of the Potter, or as a new Argument in refutation of the Objection propos'd, it will amount to much the same. For 'tis plain, by *Vessels of Wrath fitted to Destruction, and whom God had endured with much Long-suffering*, are meant the unbelieving and obstinate Jews, who by rejecting the Means of Salvation offer'd to them became the Objects of the Divine Displeasure. As to *the Vessels of Mercy* here mention'd, they are such as obey the Divine Call, and will by the Grace of God attain Salvation: whom God himself is truly said to have prepar'd unto Glory, in that he has open'd to them the way of Salvation, and bestow'd upon them Grace to enter upon and walk in it, has created or regenerated them in Christ Jesus to good Works which he has prepar'd for them to walk in. From all these things it appears that there is nothing to be met with in this whole Chapter which does in the least countenance the Absolute Decree of Reprobation; but that all of them are very agreeable to the Apostle's Scope and Design.

S E C T. VIII.

An Inquiry into those Places of Scripture usually brought in defence of Absolute Reprobation in particular.

Lastly, we will briefly enquire into those Texts usually alledg'd for Absolute REPROBATION in *Jude* particular: The first and principal of which is, *Jude* ver. 4. *For there are certain Men crept in unawares, who were before of old ordain'd to this Condemnation, ungodly Men, turning the Grace of our God into Lasciviousness, &c.* *Answ.* If by this ordaining of old, they would have us understand the Eternal Predestination of God, whereby he has reprobated the greatest part of Mankind to the Everlasting Torments of Hell-fire, without any regard to their Infidelity or Disobedience; and that this Reprobation is attended with the Divine Desertion, so that they lie under the fatal Necessity of sinning, and of persevering in Impenitence to their Lives end: then it must be said that those Men were predestinated by God to those enormous Wickednesses which *St. Jude* here describes, which would be horrid Blasphemy to assert. For by such an antecedent Decree they make God to be the sole Author of Sin, acquit the Wicked of the Guilt, and consequently from justly suffering the Punishment of their Transgressions; which is an Affront to the Divine Holiness, and contrary to the Scope of this Epistle, wherein *St. Jude* describes the Destruction of these Men as just. Therefore some other Meaning of the Words must be found out, more suitable to the Apostle's Design. *St. Jude* exhorting Believers to contend earnestly for the Faith once deliver'd unto the Saints, fortifies their Minds against the Scandal which they might easily conceive at the Seducings of false Teachers and Impostors, telling them in these Words (brought in by way of Parenthesis) that God had presignified of old the Coming and Wickedness, as well as the Punishment and Destruction of these Men; so that they ought not to imagine that God had cast away all Care of his Church into which these Men crept, but intended it should

should be forewarn'd of such Impostors long before. Hence it is that they are said *πάλαι προηγεμενύμηναι*, which does not signify preordain'd from all Eternity; the Word *πάλαι*, of old, not denoting Eternity, but a Time long since elapsed'. Nor does the Verb *προηγεμενύμηναι* denote a Divine Preordination; but a Description or Delineation made before, whereby the Frauds, Impostures, and Punishments of those Seducers are foretold, and as it were graphically described: So that by the Word *Κεῖμα*, we are not to understand their Sin and Disobedience, but the Punishment inflicted upon them for it. The Meaning therefore of the Text is this, That by the Punishment of other wicked Men, and by the Prophecy of *Enoch* God had of old describ'd and declar'd to his Church the Punishment of these Impostors, that so they might beware of their Seducements and Fallacies.

hn 12. Another Text they produce is, Joh. 12. 39, 40. *Therefore they could not believe, because that Isaias said again, He hath blinded their Eyes, and hardned their Hearts; that they should not see with their Eyes, nor understand with their Heart, and be converted, and I should heal them.* Answ. (1.) Here is no Divine Action express'd, nor is God said any where to have blinded their Eyes or harden'd their Hearts: 'Tis only an impersonal way of Speech, and in the *Hebrew* Idiom signifies passively, as much as to say their Eyes are blinded, and their Hearts hardned. (2.) *They could not believe*, does not import all manner of Incapacity of Believing, much less such a one as proceeds from any antecedent Decree, or a Divine Desertion upon such a Decree: Nor do the Words *could not* imply always an Incapacity, but some Disposition in Man, which impedes and takes away the Action, which otherwise was capable of being done by him. The Sense therefore of these Words is, Tho our Saviour wrought many Miracles among the *Jews*, yet they were very far from believing in him, by reason of their own enormous Wickednesses, whereby their Eyes were blinded and their Hearts harden'd, lest they should turn unto the Lord and he should heal them.

A third Text is 1 Pet. 2. 8. *Who stumble at the Word* 1 Pet. 2. 8
(viz. of the Gospel) being disobedient, whereunto also explain'd.
they were appointed. Answ. No mention is here made
of any Men predestinated by God to Disobedience.
The plain Meaning of the Words is this, They who
stumble at the Word, are those who bring upon them-
selves the Punishments threaten'd to the Despisers of
the Word: And they are said to be appointed thereun-
to, *viz.* that they might, when they would not believe,
incur the Punishments appointed to the Disobedient.
This Phrase is taken from those who walk not circum-
spectly, and falling upon a Stone, are the occasion of
their own Fall and Hurt.

As to the fourth Text which they alledg (*viz. Prov.*
16. 4.) we have in treating of the Divine Providence
[B. 2. C. 10. §. 3.] answer'd and explain'd it at large,
and therefore shall not insist upon it at present, but re-
fer the Reader to the forecited Place for farther Satis-
faction.

It now remains that we should consider an Argument *An Ar-*
drawn from Reason, whereby they endeavour to sup- *gument*
port their Opinion, and it runs thus: "The Predesti- *drawn*
"nation of God is a Decree relating to the END, *from Rea-*
"and to the MEANS necessary for the attaining *son an-*
"this End: The END is the Demonstration of *swer'd.*
"God's Glory, in saving the Elect by his Mercy, and
"destroying the Reprobate by his Justice: By virtue
"of this End, are all the MEANS necessarily
"tending thereto determin'd by the Divine Decree."

Answ. The End may admit of a twofold Meaning,
either as it is an End absolutely fix'd; or as a Reward
or Punishment to be confer'd on him, who either
shall perform or neglect the Condition prescrib'd for
the attaining the Reward. If we consider the End
in the former sense, we own that by virtue of the De-
cree relating to the End, the Means also conducing
thereto ought to have been determin'd: If in the lat-
ter sense, then 'tis requisite that this Condition should
not be precisely determin'd by the Decree of the Le-
gislator, and afterwards be wrought in Man accord-
ing to the Decree, but that it should be perform'd by
MAN himself. Now to discern after what manner
God consider'd Salvation in the Decree of Predesti-

nation, we must enquire into the Execution of it, since 'tis from thence we ought to judg of the Decree it self. But in the Execution of this Decree, God promises Salvation as a Reward, and threatens Destruction as a Punishment, and requires a Condition on Man's part, by the performance of which he will obtain a Reward, and by the neglect whereof he will be liable to Punishment. It is therefore impossible that he should have decreed Salvation and Damnation as the fix'd and ultimate End: For the Execution thereof under a Condition does not quadrate with the Absolute Decree, since a Conditional overthrows the very Notion of an Absolute Decree.

n Objeſſi- To this they object, that a Conditional Predestina-
ſ answer- tion (such as we contend for) is irreconcilable with
l. the Wisdom, Power, Conſtancy or Immutability of God.

onditio- 1. They ſay it is not reconcilable with the Wiſdom
nal Pre- of God; becauſe he foreknows what Man would or
ſtination would not do, and conſequently whether he ſhould at-
reconcila- tain Salvation or undergo Damnation: But what wiſe
e. Perſon would determine ſeriously to do any thing
With the under a Condition, which he foreknows thro defect of
Wiſdom of ſuch a Condition he would never do; nay has deter-
od. min'd the contrary with himſelf, becauſe he foreknows
 for certain that the Condition will never be fulfilled?

Anſw. (1.) This Argument may be retorted upon our Adverſaries in this manner; What wiſe Perſon would ſeriously promiſe any thing under a Condition, which by an Absolute Decree he had before determin'd not to give, and decreed that the Condition requir'd could never be fulfilled? (2.) We do not ſay that God decreed to do any thing conditionally, which he foreknows for default of the Condition he will never do, &c. For by this means the Divine Preſcience, if not in point of Time, yet in a natural Order, ought to precede the Conditional Decree: Whereas we maintain, on the contrary, that the Conditional Decree precedes the Divine Preſcience of the Faith and Salvation, or of the Infidelity and Damnation of every Man. For the Order of Nature requires, that God ſhould not foreknow whether a Man ſhould believe, and conſequently be ſaved, unleſs he had firſt decreed to beſtow Salvation upon

on Man under the Condition of Faith, to call him thereto, and to bestow upon him the Grace of his Spirit to obey that Call. Now all this does not proceed from any Defect of Wisdom, but because 'tis repugnant to the Nature of things that any one should believe or disbelieve in Christ, to whom the Faculty of Believing is not or will not be given.

2. They tell us that 'tis irreconcilable with the Power of God; because upon the supposition of such a Conditional Decree, the Man whom God would have to be saved under that Condition, may for want thereof be damn'd, and so Man would be more powerful than God. *Ans.* This Objection might have some Pretence if God absolutely will'd the End, and by virtue thereof absolutely will'd the Means tending to that End, and Man might notwithstanding oppose this Divine Act: But whereas God does not absolutely will this End, the Objection has nothing to pretend to.

2. *With his Power.*

3. Lastly they tell us, that Conditional Predestination is irreconcilable with the Immutability and Constancy of God: since (say they) 'tis a sign of Mutability, to destine a Man to Salvation conditionally, and upon non-performance of the Condition to destine him afterwards to Damnation. *Ans.* This is so far from being a Sign of Mutability, that it is a Token of the highest degree of Constancy; for whatever shall happen, the Decree of God is fulfilled. For the immutable Decree of God is to save the Faithful and damn the Unbelievers; and this can never be disannull'd or alter'd. But the particular Application of this Decree may vary, according to the various Circumstances of Men to whom it is applied. Thus for instance, one who believes in Christ, is reckon'd in the Number of those who shall be saved; but if he apostatizes from the Faith, he is of the Number of the Damn'd. Now this Change does not proceed from God, but from Man; since God still keeps firm to his establish'd Decree, which if he did not, he might be charg'd with Mutability: So that the Variation from this general Decree must be charg'd on Man alone.

3. *With his Immutability and Constancy.*

C H A P. III.

Their Opinion examin'd who own an Absolute Election of some Persons, but disown Absolute Reprobation.

HAVING thus stated and refuted the two former Opinions with respect to Absolute Election and Reprobation, we will in this Chapter take into consideration a third Notion, which owns indeed the Absolute Election of some, but disowns any Absolute Reprobation. For they tell us, "That God offers to all, who are call'd by the Gospel, Grace sufficient for Conversion and Salvation; nay, that even those who are not called are not deprived of all Grace of coming to God: but withal they maintain that God has elected some in particular, whom he has endued with an irresistible Grace, and will infallibly bring to Faith and Salvation." This Opinion is more tolerable, and labours under less Difficulties than the two former; since it offers no Injury to the Justice, Mercy and Philanthropy of God: for 'tis no Injustice, but the highest Liberality, to heap Blessings upon Man.

And refused. However we cannot assent to this Opinion, for the following Reasons: (1.) Because the Scripture every where proposes Faith as the Condition of Salvation: And therefore we are elected to it as such, or are translated into the Number of those who shall be saved. Whereas the Elect, whom God has absolutely elected to Salvation, are call'd so without any regard had to Faith, and are brought to embrace Faith, as a Means subordinate to the End, to which they were elected. (2.) Because with respect to those Elect, all the Threatnings of God concerning Destruction and Damnation, if Men are Infidels and Disobedient, or apostatize from the Faith, would be insignificant; and all the Exhortations to Perseverance would be to no purpose. That God does not bestow an equal measure of Grace upon all, cannot be denied; since he bestowed it in a greater degree

degree on the Apostles, on *St. Paul*, and on *Cornelius*, than on others; yet we cannot think that even that Degree of Grace was so great, but it might have been hinder'd in its Operation by Obstinacy and Unbelief. Hence it is that *St. Paul* says of himself, *that he was not disobedient to the Heavenly Vision*¹, and *that he confer'd not with Flesh and Blood*². And that he was not free from the Danger of revolting, unless he took care of himself, is plain from his own words³; *I keep under my Body, and bring it into Subjection, lest that by any means when I have preach'd unto others I my self should be a Cast-away.* (3.) Because this Opinion does not seem to be consistent with it self; for if that Universal Grace be sufficient to Salvation, I cannot conceive how no Man can be sav'd by it, but that an irresistible Grace is farther necessary for Man's Conversion and Salvation; nor can I conceive how God wills the Salvation of Men, on whom he does not bestow this necessary Grace. (4.) Because according to this Opinion it may with greater Reason be said, that God would not have all Men to be sav'd.

To this last Assertion they reply, That God wills all Men to be sav'd, because he makes use of such Arguments as are sufficient to Salvation. But say I, how are they sufficient, when a Man by Impotency cannot be the better for them? To this they say: "That Impotency or Incapacity is twofold; the one Natural, for want of the Natural Intellective Faculty, and of an intelligible Object, and of sufficient Light to discern that Object, this they say is blameless and liable to no Punishment; the other is Moral, which upon supposition of a Natural Intellective Faculty, an apprehensive Object set in a clear and distinct Light, is founded in the over-eager Desire of a reasonable Creature, bent upon an Object either different from, or contrary to the thing propos'd; and in an Aversion of Manners, in opposition to the Conditions and Circumstances of the propounded Object." *Answ.* (1.) This Incapacity which they call Moral is really Natural, since they

An Objection answered.

¹ Acts 26. 19. ² Gal. 1. 16. ³ 1 Cor. 9. 27.

maintain that 'tis not contracted by a voluntary Custom, but implanted in Man by Nature, deriv'd from that Original Corruption wherein they are born. (2.) Whether this Impotency or Incapacity be Natural and blameless, or Moral and criminal, it has nothing to do with the Question in debate: for we do not enquire whether a Man be culpable for an Incapacity contracted, which hinders him from embracing the Grace of God; but whether the Grace which God offers to Men be sufficient to Salvation. And we say, that if Grace be not able to master this Incapacity of Man, be it Natural or be it Moral, then it is not sufficient to bring Men to Salvation; and thus they render the Grace, which they call sufficient, really insufficient.

The same
pinion
ated
herwise.

Others therefore, being aware of this Difficulty, do confess, that some there are (tho but few) who believe in Christ by the Assistance of this common Grace; but that God out of his free, boundless and unmerited Goodness, that more might be sav'd, bestows a greater Assistance on some who are peculiarly elected, whereby they may be irresistibly converted. This seems to be the Opinion of Bishop Overall, when he says *, *We own that there are different Degrees of Divine Grace: And if it be allow'd that some are sav'd by common Grace, then it must be granted, that irresistible Grace is not necessarily requisite to Conversion, but only for the rendring it the more easy.* All this may be subscrib'd to, since the two main things wherein we agree with them are maintain'd by them: viz. (1.) That no Man is damn'd but for his own fault: And, (2.) The Obedience of Faith is left free and voluntary.

* In Epist. Ecclesiast. Ep. 210.

C H A P. IV.

*Of the Divine Vocation of Men to Salvation,
and the Necessity thereof.*

Hitherto we have discours'd at large of Divine *Divine* PREDESTINATION; we shall in the *Vocation* next place treat of VOCATION to Salvation, *what.* which, without taking notice of the various Acceptations of it in Scripture, we define thus: *Vocation is that Gracious Act of God, whereby he calls Men (who were Sinners, and without the Knowledge of him, and consequently guilty of everlasting Death) to Faith and Repentance, through the Gospel of his Son Jesus Christ, to the end that if they obey this Call, he may make them Partakers of everlasting Salvation.*

The Objects of this Vocation or Call are Men taken *Its Object* in a Universal Sense, that it might be distinguished from the Divine Call in the Old Testament: For then God made a Discrimination of People, elected only the Descendants of *Abraham* as his peculiar Heritage, and gave to them only the written Law, by which they were to be distinguished from other Nations, who were excluded from the Privileges which the Children of *Israel* enjoyed. But now this Distinction of People is abolished, and the *Gentiles* are admitted to an equal participation of those Privileges with the *Jews*, and together with them are called to the possession of the Heavenly Inheritance.

The Necessity of this Vocation appears sufficiently, *The Necessity* from considering the miserable and corrupt Estate *of it* wherein Men were before it: For they had no knowledge of things necessary to Salvation, upon which account they were stiled Darkness', and said to be blind'; nay, they directly erred from the true Knowledge of God. The *Gentiles* worshipped Idols, *i. e.*

† Eph. 5. 8. ‡ Acts 26. 18.

not only false Gods, but even Devils, of whom they believ'd such things, as it is a shame so much as to mention them. Hence it is that at that time they are said *to be without God in the World*¹, and *to sacrifice to Devils and not unto God*². As for the *Jews*, they had inverted the primary Intention of the Law, and plac'd the principal part of their Religion in the Observance of external Ceremonies, as our Saviour justly charges upon them³. In short, both *Jews* and *Gentiles*, before this Divine Call, were under the prevailing Custom and Habit of Sin; they were as so many Captives dragging the heavy Shackles of their Slavery, and bound down to their Servitude both by the Depravity of their Wills and Affections, and by the seeming Sweetness and Allurements of their Sins: so that nothing but the Divine Grace could knock off their Fetters, and set them at liberty again.

be dis-
sent De-
s of
ruption
Men.

But tho all Men were corrupted, and unable of themselves to think of what would tend to their Salvation, yet the Corruption was not equal in all, nor consequently were they all alike incapable of believing the Evangelical Call. True it is, they were all Sinners, and by Nature Children of Wrath; but then there are several Degrees of Sinners. For, (1.) some there are who have wholly laid aside the use of right Reason, and abandon'd themselves so entirely to one or more Lusts, that no Reason can prevail upon them to part with them, nor will they hearken to any better Counsel when offer'd to them. These Men are troubled with a wicked and perverse Spirit, have no Faith, but on the contrary put away from them all Remedy, being given up to the vile Lusts and Affections of an impenitent Heart and a fear'd Conscience. (2.) Others there are who are not fallen into so bad a State, who have not quite silenc'd the Dictates of right Reason, but yet are carnal and mind Earthly Things; in whom there are some Remains of Docility, more or less, according as they have been more or less accustom'd to do Evil. (3.) Lastly, others there are better than the former, tho few in Number, who serve

¹ E. h. 2. 12. ² 1 Cor. 10. 20. ³ Mat. 15. & 18.

God according to the best of their knowledg; but yet being ignorant of the Gospel, they are under the Prevalency of some Vices, from whence the Gospel ought to free them, and depriv'd of some Vertues which they cannot acquire but by means of the Grace of the Gospel. Such as these are said in Scripture, *to fear God*¹, *to do the Truth*², and *the Will of the Father*³, *to be of God*⁴, *to be Christ's Sheep*⁵, and *to be ordain'd to everlasting Life*⁶: And as such they believe as soon as the Gospel is announc'd unto them. Of this Number were *Nathanael*⁷, the Eunuch⁸, *Cornelius*⁹, *Lydia*¹⁰, and others. Tho these were less corrupted than others, yet they stood in need of the gracious Call of God, to repent of all the Sins wherein they had hitherto indulg'd themselves, and to believe in Jesus Christ. All Men then are not by Nature unteachable and wicked; for Indocility is not owing to our Nature, nor is it born with us, but 'tis acquir'd by a vicious Education and a bad Custom: for were it natural, it would be equal in all, since all natural things are upon the Level; but this is false, as we have already seen.

If it be ask'd, whence this Docility in Men proceeds? I answer, from that common and universal Grace, which God communicates to all Men by his Works of Creation and Providence. God not only endu'd Men with Reason, that it should be a Light to direct them in all their Actions, but also calls them to himself by his Works of Creation and Providence, and by the Contemplation thereof excites them to own and adore him as the most Merciful, Wise, and Powerful Creator and Governour of all things. Hence the Psalmist cries out, *The Heavens declare the Glory of God, and the Firmament sheweth his handy Work*¹¹, &c. And St. Paul tells us, that tho God suffer'd all Nations in times past to walk in their own ways, yet he left not himself without Witness, in that he did good, and gave them Rain from Heaven, and fruitful Seasons,

Severa.
Queries
answer

¹ Acts 10. 34. ² Joh. 3. 21. ³ Joh. 7. 17. ⁴ Joh. 8. 47.
⁵ Joh. 10. 26, 27. ⁶ Acts 13. 48. ⁷ Joh. 1. 46. ⁸ Acts 8.
⁹ Ch. 10. 1. ¹⁰ Ch. 16. ¹¹ Ps. 19. 1, &c.

filling their Hearts with Food and Gladness¹. And again, God hath made of one Blood all Nations of Men, for to dwell on the Face of the Earth, that they should seek the Lord; if haply they might feel after him, and find him². By which Places it appears, that Men might, by the Consideration of the Divine Works, be excited to seek after God. Again the same Apostle says, *The Wrath of God is revealed from Heaven against all Ungodliness and Unrighteousness of Men, who hold the Truth in Unrighteousness: Because that which may be known of God is manifest in them, for God hath shewed it unto them. For the invisible things of him from the Creation of the World are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his Eternal Power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse; because when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful³*. Lastly, St. Paul speaking of the Gentiles, says, *When the Gentiles which have not the Law, do by Nature the things contain'd in the Law, these having not the Law are a Law unto themselves; which shew the Work of the Law written in their Hearts, their Conscience also bearing witness, and their Thoughts in the mean time accusing, or else excusing one another⁴*.

It may be farther asked, whether this common Grace were sufficient to bring Men to everlasting Salvation? *Ans.* Of it self it was not; for in order to save a Sinner guilty of Death, Remission of Sins is requisite, which is a gratuitous Act applied by God as he pleases, and is that Grace which he exhibits to us in Christ Jesus, as being the Saviour and Redeemer of Mankind. That universal Grace might indeed stir up Men to perform the general Duties of Religion, and by that means please God according to the State wherein they were; yet they could not by it obtain everlasting Salvation, being destitute of the means tending thereto, *viz.* Faith and Repentance, which are only revealed and made known by the Gospel.

Again it may be asked, since this common Grace is not sufficient to bring Men to everlasting Salvation,

¹ Acts 14. 16, 17. ² Acts 17. 26. ³ Rom. 1. 18, 19, &c.
⁴ Rom. 2. 14, 15.

whether all who are depriv'd of the Knowledg of the Gospel, and consequently want the means whereby they may attain everlasting Life, are to be reckon'd among those who are to be damn'd? *Ans^w.* We have elsewhere * given a full Solution to this Question, and shall only add, that it does by no means seem probable; and that if some make a right use of this common Grace, and live up to their Natural Probity according to the utmost of their power, we believe them to be acceptable with God according to the State wherein they are, and are not absolutely excluded from Salvation, at least shall not be condemn'd to everlasting Fire; since by thus making a right use of their Reason, they are dispos'd to embrace the Terms of the Gospel, whenever propos'd to them.

But here another Question may be started, If by the right use of this common Grace a Man be prepar'd to receive the Evangelical Grace whenever offer'd to him, is not this Grace of the Gospel given according to the Merits of Men? *Ans^w.* By no means: For (1.) 'Tis a Contradiction to say, that Grace is given, and yet dispens'd according to Merit; for Grace excludes all Merit, else Grace is no Grace. (2.) The very use of right Reason, whereby Men are prepar'd for the Evangelical Grace, is the Fruit of the more universal Grace. (3.) Tho Man without the Assistance of that Grace might make a right use of his Reason, yet he would only perform his Duty without deserving any greater Grace to be bestow'd upon him. (4.) God offers the Grace of his Gospel, even to those who have not made a right use of his universal Grace, as is evident from the corrupt State wherein Men were before the Evangelical Vocation. (5.) Tho the Wickedness of Men may prevent God for a time from making known his Call to them, or provoke him by their rejecting it, to take it away from them; yet he always dispenses his Grace absolutely at pleasure, without any regard to the Deserts of Men. This Inequality and Disproportion of God's dispensing his Grace, is by no means repugnant to

* B. 4. Chap. 2. §. 3.

his Justice and Equity, since he administers all things to all Men according to their several States, by the Rules of infinite Wisdom and Justice. 'Tis indeed (as we elsewhere observ'd) a great Mystery, a Secret hid from, and unsearchable by poor finite Creatures.

angeli-Grace it. Upon the whole we conclude, That the Grace of God reveal'd to us by the Gospel, is the Beginning¹, Progress², and Completion³ of all saving Good, without the Co-operation of which we could not so much as think of, much less perform any thing conducing to Salvation.

C H A P. V.

Of the several Distinctions made of the Divine Vocation.

The nine Vocation either External or Internal. THE Vocation of God is divided into several Classes by Divines; the first Distinction is into External and Internal Vocation. By the External is meant the Word of God, either as spoken or committed to Writing. Of this nature was the Law of *Moses*, the Writings of the Prophets, and at last the more perfect Word of the Gospel. Sometimes God spake immediately by himself, at other times by Angels, but most frequently by Men, such as the Apostles and Prophets of old, and the Ministers of the Gospel at present: But whatever way God was pleas'd to reveal his Will to us, we are to look upon it as our External Call to Salvation. The Internal Vocation is that which is done by the Spirit of God, which influences the Hearts of Men, moving, exciting and stirring them up to obey the outward Call made to them by the Word. An Instance of this we have in *Lydia*, whose Heart God is said to have open'd, that she might at-

¹ Eph. 2. 8, 9. Tit. 2. 11, 12, 13. & 3. 4, 5. 2 Tim. 1. 9.
² Phil. 1. 6. 1 Cor. 1. 4, 5, 6. ³ Phil. 1. 9, 10, 11. & 4. 13.
 Heb. 13. 20, 21.

tend to the things told her by Paul ¹. However this inward Call is not a Power of the Spirit operating apart from the Word, but by the Word, as being always in it; so that really 'tis but one and the same Vocation, only with respect to its several ways of winning upon Men 'tis usually divided into the External and Internal Call; the one reaching our Ears, the other affecting and prevailing upon our Hearts.

A second Division of the Divine Vocation is into Sufficient and Efficacious, about which there is no small Dispute. The *Contra-Remonstrants* maintain that the efficacious Vocation is distinct from that which is sufficient; the latter being bestowed on several, to whom God will not grant the former. Whereas we are of opinion, that they are both of 'em one and the same, only distinguished upon the account of their different Relation to us; and that no Vocation is ineffectual on God's part, but that the Defect proceeds from the fault of Men. To evince this, we will give you a full View of both Opinions.

Sufficient Grace or Vocation, according to the *Contra-Remonstrants*, is not that which is sufficient to convert Men and so bring them to Salvation, but only to convict them of Ingratitude. Now if it be not sufficient to convert, neither is it to convict them of Ingratitude; for as 'tis no Ingratitude to refuse a Favour that is never offered, so no better excuse could be given for it, than the want of Means requisite to perform the Duty.

But here they object, That it is of it self sufficient to convert Men, but 'tis their Fault and Wickedness alone which hinders it from being sufficient. *Ans^r. Object* The Word *Sufficient* is a relative Word; nothing therefore is sufficient, but only with respect to the Person to whom it is said to be so. If therefore it cannot destroy the Wickedness of Man, it is not sufficient to convert him when corrupted; for we do not enquire what this Vocation can do with respect to an uncorrupted Man, but with respect to one that is corrupted. The most therefore that can be said, is, If it were not for the wickedness of Man,

this Vocation would be sufficient, whereas now it is not. Thus, for instance, the opening of the Prison-Doors is a sufficient means for a Man to make his Escape, if he be not chain'd down to the Floor; but if he be shackled, this means becomes insufficient.

Again they urge, that God is not obliged in Justice to bestow a larger degree of Grace on Men. *Answ.*

(1.) Grace is not call'd sufficient with respect to God, but to Men; if it cannot prevail upon them to repent in the State wherein they are, 'tis really insufficient.

(2.) Because God annexes to this Vocation not only a promis'd Reward, but also the Threatning of a severe Punishment, he is likewise in Justice obliged to bestow so much Grace as is necessary for the Conversion of Men.

*ie Ex-
tion* Our Opinion in this matter is, That that Vocation is *sufficient*, whereby an Ability is confer'd on Man in the State or Condition wherein he is, of obeying the Call of God and all his Commands: And that if it be ineffectual, it is so by the voluntary and avoidable Wickedness of Man, who makes not use of the Ability granted him by God. Hence it is that such Men are said to *have Eyes to see, but see not; and Ears to hear, but hear not*: And God is said to have omitted nothing on his part to bring them to a right Sense of things, and to prevail upon them to shew forth the Fruits of Good Works, which yet they did not. By *Efficacious* we understand that Vocation, which by the Co-operation of Man's Will obtains its Effect, but yet so as that it may fail of it by the Wickedness of Man. Upon the whole matter we say, that the same Grace is stiled sufficient and efficacious, upon the account of its different respects: It is *Sufficient*, because it is capable of producing the Effect; and *Efficacious*, because it has really produc'd its Effect.

Thirdly, Vocation is usually divided into Congruous and Incongruous. Congruous is that which God suits to the Persons, Times and Circumstances, wherein he foresees that it shall attain its Effect. By Incongruous they mean such a Vocation, which God applies to

Persons in such foreseen Times and Circumstances, wherein Man will not believe, but render the Divine Call of none effect. This Distinction may be allowed of, if we add, that no Vocation according to God's Intention is incongruous, but is only so by Accident; in that some Men are call'd after a manner, which is not likely to convert them, because they are mix'd with others to whom the Divine Word is preach'd. 'Tis certain that the Methods of the Divine Vocation are various, and not all of them alike congruous to the Vocation of Men. Thus for instance, if we are advis'd by a Friend, one noted for his Piety, and we our selves in a calm and quiet Mood, we shall be sooner prevail'd upon, than if we were admonish'd by a bad Man, one that is a Stranger, and who comes upon us when we are ruffled with our Passions. But after all, to say that God seeks for, and as it were hunts after such Circumstances, is highly unbecoming the Notion we have of him.

C H A P. VI.

Of the Method of the Operation of Divine Grace, and that it is not irresistible.

WE are now to enquire what is the Method whereby Divine Grace operates in the Conversion of Man; since 'tis a controverted Point between the *Remonstrants* and *Contra-Remonstrants*, whether this Operation of the Divine Grace may, or may not be resisted. True it is, the *Contra-Remonstrants* seldom use the Word *irresistible* in their Writings, but other Expressions which are dubious, and may be understood in a sound sense: However, because that Word is proper and most significant, and such as represents to us the whole State of the Controversy at one view without any Ambiguity, we chuse to make use of it, rather than other Expressions which would render the Dispute more abstruse. But not to insist upon Words, let the Question run thus, *Whether when God*

The Operation of Grace in the Conversion of M. is not irresistible.

seriously

seriously wills that a Man be converted and believe, it is not in Man's power not to believe, nor be converted. We maintain the *Affirmative*, but the *Contra-Remonstrants* the *Negative*. We shall therefore in two distinct Sections, First, offer such Arguments as favour our Opinion; and, Secondly, refute what can be propos'd on the other side.

S E C T. I.

Arguments to prove the Operation of Grace in the Conversion of Man, not to be irresistible.

Arg. 1. I. Our first Argument is deduc'd from several Places
ken from several places of Scripture. of Scripture, wherein God is not only said to have wil-
 led the Conversion of some Men, but also to have made
 use of such Means whereby they might have been con-
 verted; but that they rebel'd, and would not hearken
 to the Divine Vocation.

From
 a. 5. 1.
 c. The first of these Texts is *Isaiah* 5. from the 1st to
 the 8th Verse, especially ver. 4. *What could have been
 done more to my Vineyard that I have not done in it?
 Wherefore when I look'd that it should bring forth Grapes,
 brought it forth wild Grapes.* In these words God ve-
 ry pathetically shews, that he us'd all necessary means
 for the Conversion of the People of *Israel*, and yet
 they were not converted.

Exceptions
 this
 ext an-
 ver'd. To this place they make several Exceptions; as
 first, "That the Prophet here makes mention only of
 " the External Means which God made use of with
 " respect to his Vineyard; as that he planted it in a
 " fruitful Soil, built a Tower and a Wine-press there-
 " in, and gather'd out the Stones thereof: But does
 " not say that God water'd it with the Dew of Hea-
 " ven, or caus'd his Sun to shine upon it, which proper-
 " ly produce the Fruits of the Vineyard, and are a-
 " nalogous to the internal Grace whereby God con-
 " verts Men." *Ans.* (1.) These things mention'd do
 not exclude the Rain and the Sun, but rather take them
 for granted as being common to all Vineyards; but
 thereby is denoted the special Care which God took
 of this Vineyard in particular, in that he remov'd se-
 veral,

veral things which might otherwise have been a hindrance to the design'd Effect, so that the Expostulation which God makes becomes thereby the more reasonable. (2.) These Words, *What could have been done more to my Vineyard, that I have not done in it?* comprehend all those things which are requisite for the bringing forth of Fruit; else if such a Grace had not been given, it might have been replied, 'Thou hast not made use of thine irresistible Power, without which all Means are insignificant; since whatsoever thou hast hitherto made use of is ineffectual.' (3.) The Expectation of Grapes could never be ascribed to God, if he had withheld the Rain and the Sun, without the Influence of which the Vineyard could not bring forth Grapes. God therefore applied such Means as were proper for the Conversion of the Jews, and might accordingly have expected a correspondent Effect, tho by their Obstinacy it happened quite otherwise.

Others object, that these Words, *What could have been done more to my Vineyard?* are not by way of Enquiry, what could have been done more for the producing of Fruit in the Vineyard; but by way of Deliberation what should be done to the Vineyard, since it brought forth no Fruit, viz. that it should be destroyed, as it follows, ver. 5. *I will tell you what I will do to my Vineyard; I will take away the Hedge thereof, and it shall be eaten up, &c.* *Ans.* (1.) This Interpretation is repugnant to the Text, since God speaks not in the future Tense, *What shall I do?* but in the Preter Tense, *What could I have done more to my Vineyard?* thereby denoting that he had omitted nothing that was requisite for its producing good Grapes. (2.) This Determination concerning the destroying of the Vineyard would have been unjust, since for want of the Divine Grace it could not bring forth any thing else but wild Grapes. True it is, God determines the Punishment, but 'tis after all the Remedies which he had applied, had prov'd ineffectual.

A second Place we shall produce is Ezek. 12. 2. *Son 2. From E- of Man, thou dwellest in the midst of a rebellious House, zek. 12. 2. which have Eyes to see, and see not; they have Ears to hear, and hear not; for they are a Rebellious House.* Since by *Hearing* and *Seeing* in this Place is not meant

the External Sense of the Eye or the Ear, but the Knowledg and Observation of the Divine Precepts; 'tis evident that by Eyes to see, and Ears to hear, is meant the Faculty of knowing and obeying the Commands of God; which tho the People of whom God by the Prophet speaks were endued with, yet they did not make a right use of.

An Excep-
tion an-
swered.

To this Text they object, That by *Eyes* and *Ears* we are not here to understand regenerating Grace, but the Conviction of their Hearts with respect to the Truth of the Doctrine taught by the Prophets. *Answ.* (1.) We readily grant, that by *Eyes* and *Ears* in this place is not understood an irresistibly converting Grace; since we deny that God makes use of such a Grace in the Conversion of a Sinner; and it would be a Contradiction to say that God applies such a Grace, and yet the Man is not converted: But we say, that thereby is meant Grace sufficient to produce Conversion, with which Men might have co-operated, and thereby have repented; so that 'tis their own Wickedness in resisting this Divine Grace, which is the sole Impediment to their Conversion. (2.) A People cannot justly be charg'd with Rebellion, nor consequently be guilty of Punishment, as God threatens them *ver. 11.* tho they should be convinc'd of the Truth of the Prophet's Doctrine, unless at the same time a Faculty were given them of obeying that Doctrine. For there are two Impediments which obstruct our Obedience to the Divine Commands, *viz.* Blindness of Understanding, and Perverseness of Will: Now the removing of Ignorance is not sufficient to produce Obedience, unless a Power be granted capable of correcting the Perverseness of the Will.

3. From
Mat. 11.
21, 22, 23.

The third Text in favour of our Opinion, is *Mat. 11. 21, 22, 23.* *Wo unto thee Chorazin, wo unto thee Bethsaida! for if the mighty Works which were done in you, had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in Sackcloth and Ashes: But I say unto you, It shall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon at the Day of Judgment, than for you, &c.* Here it is said that such a Grace was communicated to the Inhabitants of *Chorazin* and *Bethsaida*, by which the *Tyrians* and *Sidonians* would have repented, had it been offer'd

offer'd to them; and consequently they might have repented by virtue of it, tho they did not.

To this Text they make several Exceptions; as first, *Exception to this Text answered.* That our Saviour does not say what would really, but what would probably have come to pass in Tyre and Sidon. *Answ.* This Exception destroys it self: for they tell us that without regenerating Grace it is impossible a Man should be converted; what therefore according to them is by no means possible, cannot probably come to pass. Others of them object, that this is an Hyperbolical Expression, which does not intimate what the Tyrians would have done, but only aggravates the Wickedness and Impiety of the others, by an Instance taken from the worst of Sinners. *Answ.* This is a serious and pathetic Form of Speech, directed to very obstinate Men, wherein things not dissimilar, but of a like nature, viz. Men with Men, and the Wickedness of some with the Wickedness of others, are compar'd together. Lastly, 'tis objected, That our Saviour does not speak of true and saving Repentance, whereby the Mind is converted; but of such an External Repentance only, as was shewn by the outward Signs of Sackcloth and Ashes. *Answ.* (1.) The Repentance which Men express'd by humbling themselves in Sackcloth and Ashes, was the greatest; and they made use of those external Signs to testify the Sincerity thereof: so that this is not said to degrade the Tyrians Repentance, as if it would have been only external, but to render it the greater. (2.) The word μετανοεῖν is here us'd, which denotes internal Repentance; and not the word μελαμέλεσαι, whereby outward Repentance or the external Acts of it are commonly signify'd. (3.) Such a Repentance is here understood, as our Saviour requir'd of the Cities of Judah, which was not external, but internal. (4.) Upon the account of that Repentance which the Tyrians would have perform'd, it is said that their Condition should be more tolerable in the Day of Judgment: But the external Signs of Repentance only, whilst the Heart remains impenitent, cannot mitigate the Punishment; therefore the Tyrians Repentance was to have been internal.

4. From - A fourth Place is Mat. 23. 37, 38. O Jerusalem;
 Mat. 23. Jerusalem, thou that killest the Prophets and stonest them
 7, 38. which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gather'd
 thy Children together, even as a Hen gathereth her
 Chickens under her Wings, and ye would not? Behold,
 your House is left unto you desolate. Here our Saviour
 declares the earnest Affection he had for the Jews Re-
 pentance, in that he did not once or twice, but often
 apply such Means to them as were proper to convert
 them: Nor did he this lightly or perfunctorily, but
 with an eager Desire of gathering them together,
 as a Hen gathereth her Chickens under her Wings:
 But they would not be gather'd, that is, would not
 repent.

For evading the force of this plain Passage, they have
 recourse to many Shifts. As first, they say that by *Je-
 rusalem* we are not to understand all its Inhabitants,
 but only the Princes and Elders of the People; and
 by *Children* the Commonalty: Now out of these (say
 they) our Saviour did gather many, tho the Elders of
 the People did what they could to prevent it. *Answ.*
 This is a new sort of Interpretation of *Jerusalem*, and
the Children thereof, such as is contrary to several Texts
 of Scripture, which by both denote all the Inhabitants,
 as well Rulers as People: and such as is invented on-
 ly to avoid the Force of our Argument. But suppose
Jerusalem and its Children might admit of such a Sense
 in other places, yet the Circumstances of this Text
 will not allow of any such Interpretation; but rather
 prove that the Words were spoken of the whole Peo-
 ple, as well Rulers and Princes, as those of the infe-
 rior and lower sort.

Secondly they object, that Christ utter'd this in his
Human Nature, as he was a Prophet sent forth from
 God, to call all Men to Salvation: Not in his *Divine*,
 wherein he has decreed never to make them Partakers
 of his Effectual Grace. *Answ.* (1.) This Objection
 does not suit with the former; for therein our Saviour
 was said to have been willing to have gather'd some out
 of the Commonalty, tho the Rulers resisted it; but

here it is said, that our Saviour speaks this of the same Persons who would not be gather'd, but only says it in his Human Nature. (2.) It is a downright Affront cast upon our Blessed Saviour, to attribute such a two-fold Will to him, whereby he wills one thing according to his Divine, and another according to his Human Nature; as if he were divided from, and contrary to himself. As to the other Exceptions against this Text, we have in part obviated them already, and shall therefore pass them over.

The fifth Passage we think fit to produce is *Luk. 7. 30. But the Pharisees and Lawyers rejected the Counsel of God against themselves, being not baptiz'd of him.* 5. From Luk. 7. 30. Now here it is plain that the Counsel God had decreed for the Salvation of the *Pharisees* was rejected and frustrated by them; and consequently the Grace, whereby he wills the Conversion of Men, may be resisted.

A sixth Text is *Joh. 5. 34. These things I say that ye might be sav'd; and ver. 40. And ye will not come to me, that ye might have Life.* 6. From Joh. 5. 34 40.

To this they except, First, That here is only express'd the Intention of Christ, as preaching to Men; but not the Intention of God. *Ans.* 'Tis the highest Affront offer'd both to God and Christ, to attribute to Christ as a Preacher an Intention contrary to the Design of God, since he came into the World to publish the Intention, and to reveal the Will of God to us. This would be to destroy the Certainty of Christ's preaching, and to shake the very Foundation of our Faith. Secondly they say, That the Meaning of the Words is, that Christ appeal'd to the Testimony of St. *John*, not so much for his own Credit, as for their Salvation, if there were any Sheep among them that would hear his Voice. *Ans.* This Interpretation is a manifest wresting of our Saviour's Words: For he does not say, that he spake these things for the Salvation of the Elect alone, whom they understand by *Sheep*, if there were any among them; but for the Salvation of those who would not come to him that they might have Life, as the Words of our Saviour clearly evince. For he was in earnest in his Intention of bringing them to Salvation, and by his

Doctrine furnish'd them with Means sufficient for that End; but they rejected those Means.

7. From Acts 7. 51. *Ye do always resist the Holy Ghost; as your Fathers did, so do ye.*

1. To this they raise several Objections: As first, that it does not from hence follow, that the Operation of the Holy Ghost, by which he would convert Men, can be resisted; but only that the Unregenerate may resist the Holy Ghost, nay cannot do otherwise. *Ans.* Since by the Unregenerate they mean the Reprobate, this Objection destroys it self: For they maintain that the Holy Ghost never intended to work Faith and Repentance in the Reprobate, therefore they cannot resist him; it being impossible to resist an Action, that was never intended to be wrought.

Again 'tis urg'd, That they resisted the *Virtual* and *Interpretative Intention* of God, who made use of all the Means that tended in their own nature to the begetting of Faith. *Ans.* (1.) Those Means which are said to contain in them this *Interpretative Intention*, are according to them only external Means, *viz.* Preaching the Word, Miracles, with the like: Now these, without the internal and irresistible Operation of the Holy Ghost, are as ineffectual for the producing Regeneration, as the Voice of a Man would be for raising up one from the Dead. How then do they tend in their own nature to the begetting of Faith? (2.) They are not said to resist the Word, but the Holy Ghost: Now, according to them, the Act of the Holy Ghost is distinct from the Word; therefore either they resisted the Action of the Holy Ghost, or else it must be own'd with us, that the Act of the Holy Ghost in intending the Regeneration of Men is always join'd with the Word, and consequently whoever resists the one, resists the other also.

Lastly, 'tis said, That they resisted, as far as in them lay, the Intention of the Holy Ghost in working Faith in others; *viz.* by killing those who were sent and mov'd by the Holy Ghost to preach the Truth to Men. *Ans.* (1.) Therefore according to their Opinion, they did not resist any Act of the Holy Ghost whereby he intended to work Faith in them; and consequently since God would not have them believe in

Christ,

Christ, they by their Infidelity committed nothing contrary to the Divine Will: which is Blasphemy to assert. (2.) By their being said to have resisted as far as in them lay, the Intention of the Holy Ghost in producing Faith in others, it is plainly granted that they themselves did not really resist the Holy Ghost. (3.) Nor by killing the Apostles are they said to resist the Holy Ghost, because as far as possible they hindered the Conversion of others; but because they harden'd themselves, and would not believe the Gospel, tho convinc'd of the Truth of it by the Wisdom of *Stephen*.

The eighth and last Text we shall produce in defence of our Opinion, is Isa. 65. 2, 3. *I have spread out my Hands all the day unto a rebellious People, which walketh in a way that was not good, after their own Thoughts: A People that provoketh me to Anger continually to my Face.* Here the Intention of God of converting that People is clearly described, since he is represented as one opening wide the Arms of his Mercy, ready to receive, embrace and save them; and this he is said to have done *all the day*. Add to this those other Texts¹, wherein they are said to have been call'd by God, but they would not obey the Divine Call.

II. Our second Argument runs thus: God himself commands Men to repent and believe, annexing thereto a promis'd Reward and a threatned Punishment; which Faith and Repentance he prescribes as necessary Terms of Salvation²: Now if God would work these Conditions in us by his irresistible Power, he could not prescribe them by promising a Reward and threatning a Punishment, without a manifest Contradiction to his Justice and Wisdom, as we have elsewhere shew'd³.

In opposition to this, they object the Example of our Saviour, who is said to have paid a perfect Obedience to the Father, and yet he could not sin; as also of the holy Angels who cannot sin, but yet their Obedience is prescribed as a Pattern for ours in the Lord's

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¹ Isa. 66. 4. Prov. 1. 24, 25, 26. ² Ezek. 18. 31. Acts 3. 19. Rom. 12. 2. Eph. 5. 14. John 3. 16. & 20. 31. Mar. 16. 16. ³ John 3. 23. ⁴ Ch. 2. §. 5. of this Book.

Prayer: And lastly of the evil Angels themselves, who are deprived of all manner of Power of doing good, and yet are disobedient to God, and guilty of Punishment. *Answ.* We will give a distinct Reply to each Branch of this Objection. And (1.) As to our Saviour *Jesus Christ*, it cannot be prov'd, that he in the days of his Flesh (with respect to his Human Nature) was deprived of a Power of not obeying the Divine Precept relating to the Redemption of Mankind by his Death; which if any one will term a Power of sinning, we will not quarrel about the Word. For had our Saviour been *impeccable* upon the account of his Human Nature, he could never have been said to be like unto us in all things, Sin only excepted, but there would have been a great difference between him and us: Nor could his Obedience have been proposed as a Pattern of ours, as 'tis frequently done. True it is, Sin properly taken, whereby a Man incurs the Divine Displeasure, could not be in him; but as he was subject to the same Infirmities with us, he cannot as a mere Man be said to have been *impeccable*, or not liable to Sin, tho he committed none. (2.) As to the good Angels, we suppose either that they are still subject to some Law, or have attained the Reward of their Obedience, and are confirmed in what is good. In the former sense, we deny that 'tis impossible for them to fall into Sin, since they are not of a Nature different from that of the fallen Angels, who 'tis plain did not keep their first Estate'. If we understand them in the latter Case, which seems to be the most probable, then their State has nothing in it like to ours, but is such a State as the Blessed will enjoy in the other World. Now the Actions of Spirits made perfect are spontaneous Motions, whereby they are necessarily inclined to do what is agreeable to the Divine Nature and Will; but there is no Obedience properly so called in them, nay they come nearer to Natural Actions, at least have a greater suitableness to them than to true and proper Obedience. (3.) The Sins of the Bad Angels cannot be ascribed

to their Incapacity of doing any good; for tho the Scripture informs us that they do sin continually, and tempt others to sin, yet it no where says that they are deprived of all Power of abstaining from Sin. We therefore rather think, that this their continued Perseverance in Evil, and obstinate Rebellion, proceeds from their Despair: For they know that they are consign'd over to Punishment by the irrevocable Sentence of God, and have no means left of escaping it, and therefore it is that they harden themselves in wickedness.

III. Another Argument is: The Word of the Gospel is the ordinary means appointed by God, by which he intends to bring Men to Faith and Repentance; but even that does not work upon Men with an irresistible Power, so as to make them inevitably to believe and repent. The former part of this Argument is self-evident; for whatever Notices the *Gentiles*, who are without the Light of the Gospel, have to direct them to lead a moral honest Life, yet they want the immediate means of attaining Salvation: And whatever God may do out of the common way, of which we make no Dispute, yet the ordinary method of Conversion is by the Word of the Gospel, whether preached or written. Hence that Regeneration or Conversion is usually attributed to those, whose Ministry God makes use of, are quite by announcing the Gospel to Men, they will have repentance in them'. However this Word does not work so irresistibly as to make Men inevitably to repent, but leaves it in the power of Man to embrace Faith or reject it. This appears if we consider all the Operations of the Gospel with respect to Men, where we shall find in every instance Man left to his liberty of obeying or rejecting it. For, *First*, When the Word is proposed to Man, he is not constrained to hear it, but can disregard the Preacher, stop his Ears to what he says, and go somewhere else: so that the very hearing of the Word when preached is a voluntary Act. Again, when he hears the Word, he

Arg. 3
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cannot but understand the meaning of it, especially if clearly expounded to him, and adapted to his Understanding: But then 'tis in his power either to meditate on this Word thus heard and understood, to enquire more closely into the weight of the Arguments whereon the Truth and Divinity of it is founded, and to examine more exactly the Nature of the Word; or else to forget it, and think and reflect no more upon it. Lastly, after a Man has heard and meditated diligently on the Word, he may by the Grace of God embrace, or through the perverseness of his Will reject it.

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The Truth of all this will be evinced, upon considering the following particulars. (1.) The Scripture positively ascribes to Man a Liberty of embracing or rejecting the Word'. (2.) On the one hand it persuades Men to embrace it and repent'; now Persuasion implies no Necessity, but leaves the Choice to be made by him who is persuaded to any thing: On the other hand, it exhorts and admonishes them not to reject it, *To day if you will hear his Voice harden not your Hearts'*: Which Admonition would have been insignificant, if either a Man could not but harden his Heart, or if it were impossible for his heart to be hardened. (3.) God intreats, wishes and waiteth for Men to receive the Word and be obedient to it, which argues that they who reject the Word might have embraced it; unless we would suppose that God with Dissimulation, in importuning Men to embrace it, that which he is pleased they should never be partakers of doing. (4.) On the one side, they who reject the Word are severely reprov'd as the Authors of their own Destruction', and God expostulates the case with them'; whereas on the contrary, they who embrace it are highly commended'. (5.) And,

' Deut. 30. 19. Jos. 24. 15, 22. 1 Kings 18. 21. Luk. 8. 18. Jam. 2. 21. * Rev. 3. 18. * Heb. 3. 7. * Deut. 5. 29. Pl. 81. 14. Luk. 19. 42. 2 Cor. 5. 20. * Joh. 5. 40. Acts 7. 51. & 13. 46. & 28. 25, &c. * Isa. 1. 2, 3. & 65. 2, 3. Mat. 11. 16. * Acts 2. 41. & 13. 48. & 17. 11.

Lastly, they who rejected it, or receiving it did not live up to it, are punish'd¹; whilst they who receive it and obey'd it are blessed by God with Eternal Life and the Gifts of the Holy Spirit, as the Reward of their Obedience².

IV. Our last Argument is taken from the Absurdity of the contrary Opinion; for if a divine and irresistible Power is requisite for the Conversion of Men, then no Man can be converted but who is really so; and whosoever is converted, could not be converted either sooner or later: Both which Conclusions are very false and absurd. As to the first, If none could be converted, but they who are really so, then it will follow, that God does in vain exhort the rest who are not converted to believe, and in vain offers Salvation to them, on whom he has decreed never to bestow it; which is very inconsistent with the Divine Sincerity. Then the Gospel would not be to the Reprobate (according to the primary Intention of God) *a Saviour of Life unto Life, but of Death unto Death* and Damnation. But having prosecuted this at large in the Arguments produc'd against *Absolute Reprobation*, we shall not repeat the same things over again. As to the second Conclusion, viz. That no Man could be converted before he is converted, this is as absurd as the former: For by admitting of it, a great Encouragement is given to carnal Security, and all Endeavours after Repentance are quite discourag'd, as being needless and to no purpose. If a Man be sure that all the Pains he takes will be lost, he will rather chuse to wait for the irresistible Operation of God, than weary himself in a vain and fruitless Endeavour: Especially since some are not afraid to maintain, that all a Man does in order to his Conversion, before God works it effectually in him, is of the nature of Sin. Certainly whoever is thus persuaded, would rather idly wait for the Divine Operation, than by this previous Act involve himself in a new Sin: And what a fatal occasion of carnal Security is this?

¹ Prov. 1. 24, &c. Mat. 7. 21, &c. Joh. 3. 19. 2 Thess. 2. 10. ² Joh. 14. 21.

S E C T. II.

Arguments for the Irresistible Operation of the Divine Grace, refuted.

breeds of arguments ted. Having in the foregoing Section laid down the Arguments which favour our Opinion, we shall in this consider and refute the Arguments brought on the other side of the Question: And they may be reduc'd to three general Heads.

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on.* I. The first general Head of Arguments contains those Expressions of Scripture, wherein the State of Men is describ'd before Conversion; all of which denote (as they say) an intire Incapacity to repent, which cannot be remov'd but by the efficacious and irresistible Operation of God: As that Men at that time are said to be *dead in Trespasses and Sins*¹, *to be blind*², *Darkness*³, *a corrupt Tree*⁴, *Servants of Sin*⁵, *Carnal, who cannot be subject to the Law of God*⁶, *Natural*⁷, and *to be able of themselves to do nothing as of themselves*⁸.

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y.* Now for a general Reply we say, that most of these Expressions are figurative, and to be extended no farther than the Design of him who makes use of them. For whoever would apply all the Circumstances of a Similitude to the thing alluded to, will egregiously mistake the meaning of Scripture, and fall into several Absurdities. For the right understanding therefore of figurative Expressions, the Intention of the Author who uses them ought in the first place to be inquir'd into, and how he explains his Mind elsewhere, when he speaks of the same thing in proper Words without a Figure; nor is the figurative Saying to be stretch'd any farther, than the Author's Design and his proper Words will justify. Were this observ'd in the foremention'd Expressions, the Argument taken thence would soon fall to the ground, it being found-

¹ Eph. 2. 1. ² Luk. 4. 18. ³ Mat. 6. 23. ⁴ Joh. 1. 5.
⁵ Mat. 7. 18. & 12. 33. ⁶ Rom. 6. 17. ⁷ Rom. 8. 7.
⁸ 1 Cor. 2. 14. ⁹ 2 Cor. 3. 5.

ed on the general Acceptation of the Phrases; without any due Application of them to the subject matter, as I shall now more particularly endeavour to evince.

The first Expression is, that Men are said to be *dead in Trespasses and Sins*, Eph. 2. 1. From whence they infer, that as a dead Man has no power of himself to return to Life again, but the Omnipotency of God is requir'd to raise him to Life; so also Men before Conversion have no Ability of converting themselves, but must be rais'd to a Spiritual Life by the irresistible Power of God. *Answe.* We freely own, that there is no Power in Man, by which he can in his own natural Strength attain to a Saving Conversion, or a Spiritual Life: However it does not from hence follow, that the irresistible Operation of God is requisite to raise him to a Spiritual Life. For (1.) God commands Men to raise themselves to a Newness of Life¹, which Command is inconsistent with such an irresistible Operation. (2.) Neither from the word *Dead*, can any Similitude correspondent in all respects be infer'd between a Natural and a Spiritual Death. (3.) A Spiritual Death is attributed to those to whom the Grace of the Gospel is offer'd, and on such is bestow'd a Power of rising from this Spiritual Death. The Comparison therefore between a Spiritual and a Natural Death consists in this, that as the naturally Dead exert no vital Operations, so the spiritually Dead perform no Spiritual Works, without any regard had whether they can do them, or not.

Another Expression is, that they are said *to be blind*, Luk. 4. 18. But neither from hence can it be infer'd, that an irresistible Power is requir'd to remove this Blindness, because Man is commanded to be enlighten'd: *Arise* (says the Prophet²) *be enlighten'd, for thy Light is come*, &c. By *Blindness* therefore in the figurative sense is meant an Ignorance of Divine and Spiritual things; for the removing of which such an irresistible Power is by no means requisite, but only a due Instruction, and a clear Revelation of Divine Things.

¹ Eph. 5. 14. ² Isa. 60. 1.

That it does not denote a total Incapacity of understanding Divine Truths when propos'd to them in a clear Light, is evident from what our Saviour says of the Pharisees, *If ye were blind, you would not have Sin* ; by which Expresssion he understands mere Ignorance only.

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Darkness.
Nor is there any greater Force in the word *Darkness*, Mat. 6. 23. For if they will argue from the Strictness of the Word, that as they are *Darkness* they are incapable of Light: Then I say, (1.) That for the same reason a Man cannot be converted even by the Almighty Power of God; because *Darkness*, as 'tis a mere Privation, is incapable of Illumination, and no fit Subject for the receiving of Light, and cannot be made so by the Divine Omnipotency it self: which is absurd. (2.) I will draw a quite contrary Inference, and say; If the Unregenerate, because they are stil'd *Darkness*, may be concluded to be incapable of doing any Spiritual Work; then by parity of Reason the Regenerate cannot sin because they are call'd *Light*: which last Conclusion they themselves will by no means allow of. The word *Darkness* then does denote, that Men are destitute of the saving Knowledg of the Gospel, and corrupted with a vicious Inclination deriv'd from a wicked Habit; which tho by a Man's mere natural Strength cannot be conquer'd, yet it does not argue that he is incapable of a contrary Disposition, unless God work it in him by an irresistible Power.

at by
corrupt
The Similitude taken from a corrupt Tree, Mat. 7. 18. and 12. 33. is no more a Proof that the Unregenerate can do no Good, than that taken from a good Tree argues that the Regenerate can do no Evil; since our Saviour's Expresssion is the same with respect to both. Nay, if we were to take the whole in a strict sense, the Inference will be, that Men are either good or bad, just as a Tree is, by a natural Necessity; which would be to introduce a fatal Necessity of all things. Our Saviour therefore by this Comparison means nothing else, than that 'tis impossible, but as the Fruit is

answerable to the Tree which bears it, so the outward Actions will be correspondent with the Mind, from whence they proceed; that good Works cannot proceed from a bad Mind, nor evil Works from a good Mind; that if any one would bring forth good Works, he must first cleanse his Mind from all Wickedness.

Nor is a total Incapacity of doing Good denoted, *What* any more by the Expression of Men's being *the Ser- Servants of Sin*, Rom. 6. 20. than the Description of the *of Sin* Regenerate, ver. 18. of being *the Servants of Righteousness*, argues that they could not commit Sin; for the Reason is the same in both. If it be said, "That as
 " Servants under the Power of Masters cannot free
 " themselves from Slavery; so neither can the Ser-
 " vants of Sin shake off the Dominion of it:" To this I answer, (1.) That the same Objection lies against them with respect to the State of the Regenerate, who are call'd *the Servants of Righteousness*; which when they have answered, it would be time enough to make our Reply. But, (2.) We do not say, that a Man is of himself capable of shaking off the Dominion of Sin, but that the Divine Grace is requisite to prevent him, and furnish him with Strength to conquer it: The Question is only after what manner the Divine Grace operates; which certainly cannot be infer'd from the Similitude of Slavery, and one freed from it. For, (3.) there is a wide Difference between a *Corporeal* and a *Spiritual* Slavery, the one being commonly by constraint, the other voluntary; for no Man can be the Servant of Sin, unless by the default of his Will. From whence we conclude, that nothing else is requir'd for the shaking off the Dominion of Sin, but a Man's serious and steddy purpose of being a Slave to it no longer: Whereas to be deliver'd from a *Corporeal* Servitude, the Will alone is not sufficient, but the spontaneous Release made by his Lord and Master. But suppose we should grant the Similitude to be adequate in all respects; then I add, As Servants sometimes run away from their Masters without consent, and sometimes kill them; so the Servant of Sin may shake off the Yoke, and destroy the Tyrant. I add farther, As a Servant releas'd by his Master may return to his Slavery again, and not be willing to enjoy the

the Sweets of Liberty; so the Servant of Sin, to whom God grants a faculty of being freed from that Servitude, may despise the gracious Offer, chusing freely and voluntarily to be enslaved again, and hug the Chain from which he might have been deliver'd.

Nor is there any greater Force in the word *Carnal*, *Rom. 8. 7.* of whom it is said that *they cannot be subject to the Law of God.* For all Men are not call'd *Flesh* in the same sense as the Word is us'd in this Text; being often stiled so upon the account of that Substance of which their Bodies are compos'd, and with respect to the Frailty and Infirmary of their Natures, without any regard had to Sin'. Besides, in the Original it is *φρόνημα τῆς σαρκός*, the *Carnal Mind*, or the *mindings of the Flesh*, which cannot be subject to the Law of God. Now this *φρόνημα* does not denote the Thoughts of Men so long as they are unregenerated by the Gospel, nor even theirs who live according to the Conduct of Natural Reason, among whom some there are who were morally honest, and would without question have obey'd the Will of God, if by the Light of the Gospel it had been reveal'd to them: But it signifies the Lusts of Carnal Men, who look upon the Pleasures of the Flesh as their greatest Happiness, and would not exchange them for that which is more solid. Such as these, so long as they are under the Prevalency of this Opinion, cannot be subject to the Divine Law, which prescribes the Mortification and Denial of carnal Lusts upon the expectation of future and spiritual Goods, of which they have no Relish or Notion. In the same sense is the *Natural Man*, *1 Cor. 2. 14.* said, *not to receive the things of the Spirit of God, nor to be able to receive them.* For the *Natural Man*, *ψυχικός*, is not one in his pure Naturals, but one given up to an animal and sensual Life, like the Beasts that perish; of which number all Men before Conversion are not, but only such as make their Belly their God, and indulge themselves wholly in the Lusts of the Flesh.

Lastly, the Absolute Incapacity of doing good is not proved by what is said, 2 Cor. 3. 5. That *we cannot do any thing as of our selves.* For here the Apostle has no regard to good Works, which could not be perform'd by Men, but to the Apostolical Office, whereby he won over the *Corinthians* to embrace the Faith; as evidently appears from the foregoing Verses. Now tho' we should own that a Man could do no Spiritual Good of himself, but that the Divine Grace was requisite thereto; yet there is no mention of any such thing in this place, but only of the Ministry of an Apostle. St. Paul therefore very truly says, that they could not of themselves think any thing worthy of so great a Function, since these things depend upon the special Revelation of God, and require the special Assistance of the Divine Spirit.

What by not being able to do any thing as of our selves.

II. The second general Head of Arguments contains those Places of Scripture, wherein the Action of God in converting of Man is describ'd; wherein they suppose such a Divine Act to be denoted as is plainly irrefutable, and to which Man can contribute nothing, but is merely passive. Such for instance are those Texts, wherein God is said *to create and make a new Heart in Man*¹; *to regenerate him*²; *to raise him from the Dead*³; *to quicken*⁴, and *to illuminate him*⁵; *to give him Faith and Repentance*⁶; *to give and write Laws in Mens Hearts*⁷; *to open*⁸, *circumcise*⁹, and *draw the Heart*¹⁰; *to work in us, both to will and to do of his good Pleasure*¹¹.

2. Second Head, taken from the Description of the Divine Act in converting of Man.

To this the same general Reply might be made as was to the former Argument, viz. That most of these Expressions are figurative, and no solid Argument can be drawn from them, any farther than the Design of the Author who utters them will allow of. But to be more particular:

A particular Answer

The first Text urg'd, is Ezek. 36. 26, 27. *A new Heart also will I give you, and a new Spirit will I put*

¹ Ezek. 36. 26. ² 1 Pet. 1. 3. ³ Eph. 2. 6. ⁴ Ibid.
⁵ John 1. 9. ⁶ Acts 11. 18. ⁷ Jerem. 31. 31, &c. ⁸ Acts
⁹ 16. 14. ¹⁰ Deut. 30. 6. ¹¹ John 6. 44. ¹² Philip. 2.

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within you; and I will take away the stony Heart out of your Flesh, and I will give you an Heart of Flesh; and I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my Statutes, &c. From this Place they raise two Arguments, One taken from the State of Man before Conversion, wherein he is said to have a *stony Heart*; and the Other from the Action ascribed to God, of *taking away this Heart of Stone, and giving a Heart of Flesh*. Answ. To the first of these we reply, that the *Heart* is by a Similitude said to be *stony*; because as a Stone reflects what is cast against it, so the Heart of Man rejects the Word of God, whereby he is called to Repentance, and does not hearken to it, without any regard had whether it be capable of such an Impression or not. Thus we say of an unmerciful Man, that he has a Heart of Stone, and that one may skin a Flint sooner than incline him to Charity; but by such an Expression we do not mean that he is quite bereft of a capacity of being merciful. Nor is this *stony Heart* said to be implanted in Men by Nature, according to their Notion of this natural Incapacity; but Men are themselves said by their own Disobedience to harden their Hearts like an Adamant'. This Hardness therefore being contracted by the free Will of Man, it is plain that the irresistible Action of God is not requisite for the taking it away. From hence then, in opposition to their second Argument, it is evident, that by *giving a Heart of Flesh*, is not meant any irresistible Operation of the Divine Grace. This is evinc'd by all the Circumstances of the Text, for this Promise was made to a whole Nation, was to be fulfilled within a little time, and therefore is not (as they pretend) a Promise of a special and determining Grace belonging only to a few, viz. the Elect.

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As to their Argument taken from the Words, *regenerating, raising from the Dead, quickening*, which are all synonymous Terms importing the same thing; we say, that *Regeneration* is ascribed to the Word of God, wherein (as we proved before) there is no irre-

listible Force, for *he begat us with the Word of Truth, by the Resurrection of Jesus Christ from the Dead*¹: That is, God by the Resurrection of Christ from the dead has proved his whole Doctrine to be Divine, and rendred us certain of our Resurrection to Eternal Life, if we tread in our great Master's Steps. Our Belief then of the Resurrection of Christ is a powerful Motive to excite us to be pious, and to be regenerated, that so we may partake of that happy Resurrection. Hence it is that our Salvation is attributed to Faith in the Resurrection of Jesus Christ, as the most pre-vailling Spur to Holiness of Life². Now this whole Operation is not *Natural* but *Moral*, and such as may be resisted by Man; so that in order to attain its end, it is requisite that the Mind of Man should not be refractory or obstinate. The whole Similitude therefore consists in this, that Man is entirely changed by that Act of Divine Grace, and enters upon a new course of Life; so that upon comparing his former with his present way of living, he seems to be wholly a new Man, renovated in his Understanding, Will, Affections and Works; and upon the account of this Change it is, that he is said to become a new Creature³, to have put off the old Man, and to have put on the new one⁴.

The *illuminating* or *enlightening* of a Man is likewise done by the Word of God, which is called a *Lamp unto our Feet, and a Light unto our Paths*⁵; since when 'tis revealed to Man, it chases away the Darkness of Ignorance, and gives him sufficient Instructions for the embracing of the Faith. Now here is no necessity of an irresistible Operation for the effecting of this, but only a faithful Ministry, and a clear Exposition of the several things contained in God's Word. As to what is said of God's *giving Faith and Repentance*, this by no means implies any irresistible Action; nor has this Gift always and necessarily its Effect joined with it. When therefore God gives Men a Power of believing and repenting, he is truly said to grant them Faith and

*What by illuminat-
ing, giving
Faith, and
writing the
Law in our
Hearts.*

¹ Jam. 1. 18. ¹ Pet. 1. 3. ² Rom. 10. 9. ³ 2 Cor. 5. 17.
Gal. 6. 15. ⁴ Eph. 4. 22, 24. ⁵ Ps. 119. 105.

Repentance, since 'tis all that he on his part is required to give; and when a Man makes a right use of the Strength granted him, then the Gift becomes effectual. However this Effect is not so necessarily annexed to the Divine Gift, but that a Man may reject this Offer, and spurn at the Divine Grace. *The writing the Law of God in our Hearts* is effected by the clear proposing of the Divine Word, and by the greatness of the Blessings, whereby God does so powerfully prevail upon Men, that they freely and chearfully give themselves up wholly to his Service.

Opening of the Heart is ascribed to God, *Acts* 16. 14. where the Conversion of *Lydia* is described. Tho we grant that here a greater measure of Grace is intimated, than was given to other Persons, yet the omnipotent and irresistible Act of God cannot be infer'd from thence; since sometimes a greater measure of common Grace may be applied, which however does not destroy the liberty of obeying or not obeying. But there is no occasion of this Plea. In this Text we have only an Account of the good Effect which *St. Paul's* preaching had on that pious Woman; and mention is made of it, as the Reason why the Apostle took up his Lodgings in her House: So that in truth *St. Paul's* preaching had this good Effect upon her Heart, which it had not upon others, who through their own Fault and Obstinacy rejected it.

As to the Action of *Circumcising the Heart*, attributed to God, *Deut.* 30. 6. this, no more than the former Expressions, denotes not any Divine irresistible Act: For it does not follow, because in the external Circumcision a Man is merely passive, that he is likewise so in that which is spiritual; since in this latter, not only the Concurrence of God and Jesus Christ, but also that of Man is required.

By the Action of *Drawing*, *Joh.* 6. 44. *No Man can come unto me, unless the Father who sent me draw him*; we are not to understand any irresistible Operation of God, as appears by the Circumstances of the Text. For in this Chapter our Saviour sharply reproves the *Jews* for their not coming to, or believing in him. If therefore he had said, that no Man could believe in him, unless the Father drew him by an

omni-

omnipotent and irresistible Force, he would have cast the whole Blame of their Infidelity upon the Refusal of such a Divine Operation, and have given them a manifest occasion of despising his Reproof, and of objecting that they were blamed in vain, since God withheld that Operation from them, whereby they might be converted, and that as soon as he pleased to make use thereof they would believe. Now what can be more absurd than this? Again, tho this *Drawing* might be in some sort forcible, yet it might also be a friendly and moral Action, such as might be resisted. As for instance, if you would persuade a Man to come out of a certain place, and *gently draw* him by the Hand, he may resist that Motion, withdraw his Hand, and not hearken to your Counsel. It may likewise be a moral and gentle Act, as when a Man draws others after him by his Eloquence, or Benefactions: And thus God is said to *have drawn* Israel *with Bands of Love*. We own indeed that no Man can come to Christ unless the Father draw him, and that the Divine Grace is the Rise of every spiritual and saving Good; but then the Question lies, how this Grace operates, whether irresistibly? which we have evinc'd cannot be infer'd from the word *Drawing*. If it be ask'd, what this Divine Drawing is? I answer, 'tis such an effectual Drawing or Action of God, whereby he disposes and prepares Men after such a manner, that they may come to Christ whenever the Gospel is preached to them. Such were they among the *Jews*, who were obedient to the Law of *Moses*, and thereby were disposed to receive the Doctrine of Christ, and to believe in him as soon as they heard of him. Our Saviour therefore tacitly cast the fault of the *Jews* Infidelity upon their own Wickedness, in not suffering themselves to be drawn by God by the Institution extant in the Law, and by which they might have been prepared to have received him: And at the same time he asserts the Divinity of his Doctrine, since if no Man could believe it unless God drew him, it must necessarily have God for its Author.

But perhaps it may be said, that there is greater force in the Words, *Phil. 2. 13.* where God is said to *work in the* Philippians *not only to will*, but also *to do of his good Pleasure.* Answ. Whoever seriously attends to these Words, will find that there is nothing in them in favour of that determining Grace, whereby Men are necessarily converted. For, (1.) The Apostle speaks not of such an Effectual Operation, whereby God works Faith and Repentance in our Wills, but of such an Operation whereby he works in them that believe, in opposition to that Operation whereby the Devil, as the God of this World, is said to work in the Children of Disobedience. (2.) God is not said to do this by an irresistible Power, but 'tis only said, that he *works in us both to will and to do.* This we readily grant, but then the Dispute is only about the method of the Divine Operation. There are several Modes of doing any thing, which are not all of them so effectual as never to fail of their end: Thus he who persuades and excites a Man by Gifts and Promises, works in him to will and to do, but yet the other may despise his Exhortations and Promises. (3.) The Text it self does not allow of such a Construction to be put upon it; for these Words are a Motive used by the Apostle to enforce the Admonition he had given them *of working out their own Salvation with fear and trembling*; which would have been insignificant, did God work on them with an irresistible Power. (4.) And lastly, The Apostle would have told an Untruth; for since his Exhortation is directed to all the *Philippians*, it follows that the Motive enforcing it is likewise directed to all of them. Now it is not true, that God works in all the *Philippians* both to will and to do so effectually as not to fail of his end, for the contrary to this appears, *Ch. 3. V. 18.* Or if they would have these Words to be understood only of the Elect, then it must be said that the preceding Admonition belongs only to them; than which nothing can be more absurd. The plain meaning therefore of this, and the Verse next before it, is, "Work out your Salvation with fear and trembling, not only when I am present with, but much more when I am absent from you; for you are under the Inspection

“ Inspection of an All-seeing God ; ’tis he who communicates his Grace according to his good Pleasure ;
 “ ’tis he, by bestowing all things that are requisite on his part, who works in you both to will and to do :
 “ be not therefore negligent in your Duty, lest he withdraw his Grace again from you.”

Lastly, they urge that God is said, *Eph. 1. 19.* to exert the exceeding greatness of his Power toward us who believe, according to the working of his mighty Power. *19. explained.* Answ. Nothing can be concluded from hence for such an efficacious and irresistible Operation of God in the Conversion of a Sinner. For, (1.) The Apostle does not here speak of the greatness of the Power which God would exert towards Unbelievers, in order to bring them to the Faith, but only of that Operation which he does and will use towards the Faithful ; since ’tis expressly said, *towards us who believe.* (2.) He speaks only of the Power of God which he would exert towards them who believe, when he should raise them from the dead ; which now whilst we live in this World we cannot fully comprehend, tho some notice of it is given to us by the Power which God manifested in raising up *Jesus* from the dead, and exalting him at his right Hand : So that the Power here mentioned has no relation to the irresistible Operation of God, whereby they pretend that he works Faith and Repentance in Men.

III. We are at last come to the third general Head of Arguments, being such as they deduce from Reason in opposition to our Opinion. *3. The third general Head of Arguments drawn from Reason, answered*

In the first place they argue thus, “ If the Grace whereby we are converted does not operate with that Energy, so as not to fail of its Effect, but the Co-operation of the Free Will is requisite thereto ; then Grace is not the Principle of all Good, but Man’s free Will.” Answ. There is no consequence in this Argument, for it does not follow because Grace is not the Principle of all Good in such or such a manner, that therefore it is not so in any other manner. If it be asked, how it comes to pass that when an equal measure of Grace is confer’d on two Persons, the one believes and the other does not ? I answer, That ’tis because the one embraces, the other rejects

the Grace offered him; the one receives it by the right use of his Free-Will as excited by the Divine Grace, the other rejects it by the abuse of his Free-Will, and a fresh Disobedience and Obstinacy. Grace is the *primary Cause* of Faith in Man, tho it be not the *sole Cause*, the Co-operation of the Free-Will as stirred up by the preventing Grace of God is requisite, else there could be no such thing as Obedience or Disobedience in Man.

A second Argument which they produce, is, "If God in the Conversion of a Man does not make use of that effectual Operation, which determines Man, but 'tis in Man's power to embrace or reject Grace, then he distinguishes himself from others, and has whereof he may boast, contrary to what the Apostle says, *Who maketh thee to differ from another? And what hast thou that thou didst not receive? Now if thou didst receive it, why dost thou glory as if thou hadst not received it?*" Answ. True it is, Man of himself has no power of distinguishing himself from another, since all alike stand in need of Salvation: But when the Divine Grace is offered, if one rejects it, and another by Faith embraces it, what can be plainer than that he who believes, does by his ready Obedience distinguish himself from the Unbeliever? A notable Instance of this Distinction we meet with, *Acts 13. 46, 47, 48.* where the *Jews* are said to have rejected the Word, and to have counted themselves unworthy of everlasting Life, whilst the *Gentiles* rejoiced in it, and as many of them as were dispos'd to eternal Life believed. Hence it is that such are commended and rewarded by God, whilst the others are reprov'd and punished. However it does not follow that a Man has any reason of boasting towards God; for what occasion can there be of boasting, because he is obedient to, and embraces the saving Grace offered him by God? A Beggar whom a Prince has enriched with his Bounty might as well boast against him, and say, that it was by his own Industry and Power that he got his Wealth, because he did not refuse when he

might, but greedily accepted of the offered Treasure. If it be said, that he may boast against another who is an Unbeliever: To this I reply, that if he does it with a design of magnifying himself, he commits a Sin: because whatever good he has in him, is owing not to himself, but to the Grace of God. But if he boasts in order to stir up another to Emulation, we nowhere find such a boasting to be forbidden; nay, we have *St. Paul's* Example to countenance such a boasting, since he *2 Cor. 11.* recounts at large the several Labours, Conflicts and Persecutions which he endured for the sake of Jesus Christ: but yet he does it with all the becoming Modesty of a Christian, ascribing all to the Grace of God, and not to his own Industry and Strength. As to what is said, that *St. Paul* in the fore-cited Text, *viz. 1 Cor. 4. 7.* forbids such boasting as is over others: To this we reply, That the Comparison there does not run between Believers and Unbelievers, but between Believers only, who were endued by God with different measures of Grace; and that the Apostle treats of those extraordinary Gifts, which formerly were so prevailing in the Church, and upon the account of which the *Corinthians* valued themselves one above another. 'Tis such a boasting as this that *St. Paul* condemns as vain, because those Gifts depended intirely on the gratuitous Disposal of God, who distributed them to every Man as he thought fit. Now in this case there was no occasion of glorying; or else *St. Paul* had an Eye on that Vain-Glory, whereby one Man boasted of being converted by a more worthy Apostle than another was. Now these things were external, and depended on the voluntary Dispensation of God.

Thirdly, they argue, "If such a *Determining Grace* be not requisite for the Conversion of Man, then God does not bestow a more special Grace on those who are converted, than on those who are not converted: And consequently a greater Grace was not given to *Peter* and *Paul*, than to *Judas* and *Pilate.*" Answ. (1.) If they mean that God in the ordinary Vocation of Men bestows that Grace upon all, whereby they may be converted; so that tho God has some peculiar Persons, on whom he extraordinari-

ly showers down greater Gifts of Grace, yet all have Grace sufficient for their Conversion; then we grant that God does not in his ordinary Calling of Men bestow a more especial Grace upon one than he does upon another. (2.) As to the Instances mention'd, no Consequence can be drawn from thence; for tho God in the ordinary Vocation bestows an equal Grace upon all, and such as is sufficient for their obeying the Divine Call, yet he may sometimes make choice of some Persons, to whom he may grant a greater measure of Grace, especially the Apostles. (3.) If by greater Grace they mean a Grace distinct in kind, we own that a greater Grace is not given to one than to another; but if such a Grace as differs in degree, then we deny this Inference, *God did not give an irresistibly operating Grace to Peter and Paul, therefore he did not give them greater Grace than to Judas and Pilate.* (4.) Suppose it should be granted, that God in the beginning of the Vocation did not bestow a greater Grace on the Apostles, than on *Pilate* and *Judas* and other Infidels, where would be the Absurdity? For this is no derogation of the Divine Honour, which bestows on all Men Grace sufficient for Salvation; 'tis rather an Aggravation of the Unbelievers fault, and renders them the less excusable.

But here it may be said, that at this rate he who believes has no greater cause of returning God Thanks, than he who does not believe. *Ans.* 'Tis no Absurdity to say, that he who believes not has as much reason to return God Thanks, as he who believes, if we consider the first Offering of Grace: Otherwise 'tis certain that God from time to time bestows new and greater Largeesses of his Grace on those who believe; for 'tis enough that both he who believes not, and he who believes, have sufficient reason to be thankful to God; else the Unbeliever could never be charged with Ingratitude, if this greater Grace denied to him be a determining and irresistible Grace, and necessarily requisite to his Conversion. If it be asked, why then does *St. Paul* so often make mention of the *Special Grace* of God towards him, particularly *Gal. 1. 15, 16*? To this I answer, either he speaks of the extraordinary Grace vouchsafed to him as a chosen

chosen Vessel; or else of the common Grace, which with respect to him was extraordinary, since he had been a Persecutor of the Church. As to what he says of *his being separated by God from his Mother's Womb*; his meaning seems to be this, that he was destined to the Apostleship, not for any Merits of his own, but by the Grace of God alone; and that he contributed no more to it than an Infant just born.

Lastly they argue, that the Method of Divine Providence is this, that all second Causes do so depend upon God in their very *Possibility, Being and Operation*, that they cannot determine themselves to any Actions; but 'tis requisite that those Acts with all their Circumstances should from all Eternity be pre-ordained by God as the first Cause, and the second Causes should in time be predetermined by God, not only to the Act it self, but even to the Mode of Action.

Answ. When we treated of *Divine Providence* we refuted this Opinion at large, and shall not repeat what was there said, but shall only add a Word or two. (1.) If this Opinion be allowed of, then there will be introduced a fatal and inevitable necessity of all Things and Events, both Negative and Positive, as well of bad as of good Actions. (2.) This would be to make God the only Cause of all the Sins and Enormities, which are committed over the whole Face of the Earth; than which nothing can be more blasphemous, nothing more destructive of all Religion, and nothing more repugnant to the just Retribution of Rewards and Punishments.

M. J. Ross binding

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